

28 Short Stories from: Locomotive Engineers Journal, Volume 52 January 1918, and on.

Desperate Ride To Save A Life By Xeno W. Putnam
Robbery Plot Went Astray By Howard Fielding
The Strategy Of Love By Henry Linsley Doolittle
Doctor Bemerton By Elinor Marsh
The Social Ladder By Ethel Holmes
A Race For A Stake By Alan Hinsdale
A Crop Of Potatoes By F. A. Mitchel
The Man In The Corner By W. R. Rose
Flanagan's Boy By Clarissa Mackie
The Ticket By Agnes G. Brogan
The Redfield Will By F. A. Mitchel
The Chester Inn By Ethel H. Holmes
Her Adventurous Night By Agnes G. Brogan
A Marine Chase By Warren Miller
The Owner's Unexpected Return By Pauline D. Edwards
A Trap Foiled By Sarah Baxter
Why I Did Not Go To College By Donald Chamberlin
Mr. Willmarth By Pauline D. Edwards
His Sweetheart By Warren Miller
The Envelope Of Fate By Agnes G. Brogan
Over The Wire By Warren Miller
Making History By Alan Hinsdale
How The Scale Was Turned By F. A. Mitchel
A Clever Ruse By Warren Miller
An Appalling Moment By Elinor Marsh
Making An Acquaintance By F. A. Mitchel
How She Proposed By F. A. Mitchel
A War Blight By Ruth Graham

Desperate Ride to Save a Life

BY XENO W. PUTNAM

It hardly seemed a chance at all, but we were forced to call it one so long as there was nothing better. Of course 'twas Tarpon's work, Tarpon, whose murderous band my stout friend had restrained and who had done this other murder just to bring an avenging posse down on Jack in a humor that would render inquiries few and explanations useless.

Bill Morgan brought the word. It seemed a strange unbending of the outlaw's spirit. Perhaps his own wild, hunted life led him to pity in his uncouth way a victim run to earth without warning, or possibly he had some personal memories to be avenged. Anyway he told us just before daybreak of the cowardly crime that had been fastened so unmistakably and so unjustly upon Jack and of the furious pursuers close upon our trail.

Before us were the mountains, grim and full of dangers for the stranger fugitive, but to this score of relentless followers, home. Some forty miles behind lay Halseyville and safety, for half her leading citizens—the mayor himself, to say nothing of his fair daughter—would have sworn to Jack's presence at a banquet given in our honor at the very time the murder was committed miles away. But between our camp and vindication rode a relentless, uninquiring foe with a single purpose—and a halter. The outlook was gloomy enough for poor Jack.

It seemed that I was not connected with the crime. That, too, was Tarpon's skillful planning, or perhaps my government position saved me. Vengeance was to be taken upon Jack alone, my great, rough, burly friend with the heart of a lion or a woman, as the occasion called for courage or for kindness.

When only a single course is possible one can think quickly what to do. I gathered in Corenca, loath to be gathered from the luxurious pasture of the foothills, and, throwing the saddle over her back, jerked up the girth so tightly that she flinched and snapped at me. Then, flinging the other saddle on Jack's horse, we headed her off across the country toward her old home alone. As she turned and looked back at Corenca, pawing impatiently at the restraint, a sharp crack of the whip encouraged the eagerness of her departure. Soon she disappeared from view in the dim light, leaving a plain but bootless trail behind for our pursuers to presently follow a few miles in their quest for Jack. Then after a silent handshake that said more than words, my friend went dodging in among the heavy shadows of the mountain canyons, leaving me alone with my wonderful Corenca, whose speed was matchless, and whose temper was the devil's own. If he could only evade capture while I rode to Halseyville for help! Twice forty odd miles would have to be covered, and the hope was slight, but Corenca was a wonderful foundation upon which to build it. If the foe should lose even a little time on the false trail of the other horse and Jack get a few extra hours, just a few, where each moment gained was glinted with gold!

My thoroughbred mare, chafing and tugging at the bit as we swept out into our long, hard trip, set me to wondering whether I spared her most by holding her in or letting her have her head. I tried to compromise, but she willed it otherwise, and the ground slipped away under her feet like a smooth-running belt from the flywheel of some ponderous machine. It seemed as if she knew the need for haste and scorned a suggestion of her own limitations. The only notice my restraining hand received was an impatient toss of her shapely head and a savage jerk at the reins.

In less than an hour—only an hour behind poor Jack, I thought, with a sinking heart—I saw our grim pursuers in the road before me, but all that I feared from them was delay. They knew I was not the man they wanted and were themselves there to uphold their idea of the law and human justice in their fierce, crude way. They might attempt to take me back with them—the one thing that I really dreaded—but of personal violence I had no fear. My government position would again protect me, and whatever time they hindered me, Jack would also gain from them.

As we approached I got the halting signal, but the little mare rushed ahead, alike unmindful of their shouting and my hand. Two men dismounted hurriedly and made a rush for my bridle as we passed. In a flash Corenca's fighting blood was up, and, with gnashing teeth and eyes like a dragon's, she was upon and over them and dashed ahead. A dozen mounted men spurred after us with the act. They might as well have chased the wind, for the very dust from the little mare's feet fell short of their leader. They dared not shoot lest Uncle Sam should hear the echo presently, and only wasted a little time for Jack to profit by.

Once clear of pursuit Corenca fell off a little in her speed, but not in her independence, as I quickly learned in my first attempt to juggle with the reins. After all, why should I not let her have her way now that no special cause for speed bursts lay ahead? She was a willful child of the plains. Let her sweep them to suit her fancy. She would lose no time and, perhaps better than I, could judge of her own endurance. So we left the dubious miles behind us in pursuit of the miles ahead that she rapidly found and conquered one by one. Sometimes the pace was a moderate canter, sometimes swift as the wind, but I watched the flanks beneath me in vain for a labored breath. She seemed to temper her speed to the limit of what she could endure, without drawing upon that wonderful reserve force that made her at once the pride and the terror of the plains.

So 30 odd miles lay behind us presently, and the game little beast had drawn up only once for a drink as she forded a stream. Still, more than one sign now told me that she had made her run at an awful expense to herself. Once she began to show her fatigue, it seemed as if her dissolution was to be as rapid as her flight had been. The willful flirt of her head she had left miles behind, and she stumbled a little sometimes as she still galloped faithfully on. Each breath was a heave and a gasp now, and the white foam that fell from her mouth was occasionally colored with red. Should I dismount and feed her or try to crowd her through? Back among the mountain canyons I could see a kindly rugged face, now stern and resolute, at bay. Before me, only a few miles ahead, lay Halseyville and rescue. Already I could almost see the stately mayor and a few chosen friends rushing away on their errand of mercy and justice. Nor could I quite forget the sweet-faced girl, in whose eye a tear had stood so close behind the laugh she had given Jack at parting. And it all tempted me forward. Still, it would be a foolish thing to ruin all so near my journey's end by letting my now suffering horse go off from her feet for want of a few minutes' rest.

Corenca stood quiet enough now, with head down and heaving sides, but with the fire still unquenched in her flashing eyes. Reluctantly I dismounted and loosened the saddle girth a little. Then a sight met my eyes that stayed my hand at the fastenings while I looked again, to bring me a moment later back into my seat. For the first time that day I urged Corenca beyond the limit of her chosen speed, and right nobly did she struggle to respond. But the heaving sides told their own story of a conquered body still reeling forward under the impetus of an unyielding will. Poor, faithful servant! It was, then, to be a race to the death— of my horse or my friend—and in that choice of course the dumb brute had to lose. Now that the decision had been forced upon me I spared the use of neither whip nor spur upon Corenca—Corenca, to whom no one had ever before dared to teach the use of either. No more thought of trying to save her—just to get the last ounce out of her before she fell. Far ahead, just leaving Halseyville, I could see a queer little red spot rushing toward us, which I realized to be the mayor's automobile, bearing him rapidly away to a neighboring town. For a few miles his route lay straight toward me, but presently the road forked, and the red spot would bear out of reach the one man whose presence would awe Jack's pursuers into submission at a word. If I could reach those forks in time it would save me a smart little ride to the town. If I failed I feared me much that all my efforts were doomed to failure—

that the game was up. Well, it would never be Corenca's fault. As I noted her trembling and unsteady gait I could not but hope that when she did go down she would be out of her misery soon. Again and again I

urged her on, heartsick as I felt the futile struggle she was making under me. It was a losing race. Still, she lost it by so narrow a margin that she won for me.

Already the steel steed was about to swing around the curve and leave me such a few rods behind, when Corenca, as though still obedient to her unconquered will, plunged wildly into the air and sank dying to the earth. Her race was over, but she had been grit to the very end.

A pair of sharp eyes, not the mayor's, saw the accident and gave in quick report. So it happened that instead of leaving me helpless, they presently drew up by my side and looked down on me crouching by the dumb brute's head.

It wasn't the mayor who first comprehended the story I tried to tell them of Jack, and it wasn't his voice that ordered me into the vacant seat, nor his hands that suddenly took control of the machine and gave it motion. I cast one bitter look back at my dying horse stretched there alone, upon her side, but I hadn't the time to end her misery with a pistol shot, as I was minded to do. Now at last was Halseyville behind me and ahead the mountains—and Jack. I stole a glance at the slight girlish figure whose guiding hands now seemed like steel, but over whose face had come something that was neither a smile nor a tear.

How the wind came up and rushed in our faces as the auto gathered speed. It wasn't a flight, but a melting away of objects. Things were and then were not. The belt over which we had galloped, Corenca and I, now changed to a smooth zone of marble, flanked on each side by a ribbon of greenish gray. We didn't seem to advance, just swayed and tilted, while the green gray ribbons on either side of us rolled into a tangle of mist just ahead, into which we were constantly trying to plunge. One could not determine where the real joined forces with the imagination. Somewhere between the two the real became invisible and the invisible seemed almost real. There wasn't a thought of fear, but a half formed wish that something would happen to add variety to this throbbing, undulating sensation, without particular motion and with nothing to see. Where we were or what we were doing not one of our senses could tell. We were only ethereal spots in the midst of an infinite nowhere, at the end of which lay my dying horse and at the other the friend I was trying to save.

I knew in a half dazed way we were rushing ahead at a speed that was terrific, but felt impatient that it was not greater still. The breath of the whirlwind might have been tame to my quivering overwrought nerves. Shut out of the material world by this cloud wall, I longed for a thrill of expectant danger to break up the depressing sense of isolation. It wasn't the call for haste so much as the call of impatience—a mind taken entirely out of its realm of accustomed comparisons and clamoring for sensation rather than accomplishment.

Such were some of my chaotic impressions when I suddenly became conscious of objects about me and realized that we were slowing down. The green gray ribbons took on a spotted aspect, which gradually expanded into some of nature's own pattern, and I was conscious of a sudden relief to get back into the world again. The gray marble pavement shook out into the swift flying belt of the morning, then gradually came to a stop in the midst of mountains, trees and human forms and a few other things.

"Jack!" came a feminine scream from the front seat of our vehicle. Then I noticed for the first time my friend in the midst of the group of men, still on his feet, but with a telltale rope dangling from a limb directly over his head.

We carried him back with us presently, seated considerably on the back seat beside the feminine voice, while the mayor and I, as befitted our official rank, rode in front. Thus we proceeded back toward Halseyville, attended on either side for some distance, not by the green gray ribbons of a short half hour before nor even by the shapes of my morning fancy, but by a good, stout guard of armed and penitent men, now anxious

to do homage to the man they meant to have slain in the name of the law. In a little real haste and a good bit of spite we hit up their gait quite briskly ere they finally parted company with us after many a goodly wish and shake of Jack's hand, then away like the wind for Halseyville.

Faster and faster over the road that Corenca had galloped so well till the ribbons swung up to their old place again and cut off our view of the plains, on past where the avengers that morning had thought they would stop me and while getting their lesson in thoroughbred temper, lost just the small margin of time that saved Jack until our return, or splash through the ford where my horse slaked her thirst just before rushing on to her death, on past where I held up to rest and to feed her—a brief rest it proved and the last she was ever to have—on past where she fell and doubtless now made up her part in the greenish gray ribbon which unrolled beside us. Then we rode into Halseyville and found some unusual excitement ahead, where a group of rough men were attempting to corral a game little mare whose speed, they declared, was as swift as the wind and who still held the devil's own temper.

Robbery Plot Went Astray

BY HOWARD FIELDING

My visitor had an excellent counterfeit of a frank demeanor, yet I observed that he desired strict privacy for our interview and that he was interested in the question whether the sound of our voices would penetrate the thin partition which separated my modest sanctum from the composing room of the newspaper. He drew a chair very close to mine and laid a clipping on the desk.

"Could you tell me," said he, "who wrote that article?"

It was a labored disquisition on the reading of cryptograms and had been printed in last week's Saturday supplement with small hope on my part that it would amuse anybody in our town.

"Certainly," said I. "It was written by David Graham, foreman of my composing room."

"Could I see Mr. Graham?" he asked.

"You may send him your card," said I, "the real one, not the one you sent to me."

He eyed me with mild surprise.

"What makes you think—" he began, but I cut in upon him.

"I don't think; I know. You are a postoffice detective, and your name is Charles Baxter. You are in this town to investigate the robbery here last week. I'm investigating it also as a part of my business, and that's how I happen to know you."

"Right," said he. "But as for the card"—

"We shall not need it now. I'll send for Mr. Graham."

My foreman was a tall, thin, long-faced Scot with a hard mouth and a mild eye.

"I want you to help me in 'the matter of this postoffice robbery," said Baxter coming right to the point.

'The job was done by two men, and we know one of them, but it's the other who has the plunder. The fellow we've got our eyes on hasn't a cent of it, and he is keeping away from it and from his pal. He's as smooth an article as I've encountered in many a day. We could arrest him any minute; but, though we have a moral certainty that he's guilty I couldn't bank so high on the legal evidence. And, anyhow, we should lose the pal and the swag, for it's a sure thing that our man wouldn't squeal. He hasn't been near this town since the night of the robbery. He's living in a boarding house in Stanhope, twenty miles west of us, and his patience seems to be about as long suffering as ours. His only mistake is that he writes letters, and we've trapped one of them. He started to mail it yesterday afternoon and dropped it on the street. One of my men, who was shadowing him, nabbed it in a holy second, and here it is."

Baxter laid an envelope on the leaf of my desk between Graham and me. We saw that it was addressed to Miss Annie Davenport, a young woman much admired in our town and of unblemished reputation. I was amazed and distressed

that her name should be brought into such an affair.

"It's open," said the detective to Graham. "See what you can make of it."

"I am not so clear as to that," answered Graham. "It would appear to me that I might like the young lady's permission."

Upon this Baxter made quite a flowery argument, speaking of the interests of justice and other lofty considerations, but Graham and I were not impressed.

"Who wrote this?" I asked when the detective paused for breath.

"You'll know the name," said he— "Walter Allen."

I did indeed know the name and the man. Allen was the sole survivor of a family that had once been prominent in our town. He himself had been a wild youth, and his reputation had not improved with added years. He had inherited a small property from his father and was supposed to have squandered it. The homestead had been sold in foreclosure proceedings within a year, and little had been seen of Allen

in Stockton since then. I knew, however, that he had once been very attentive to Annie Davenport, but had been supplanted in her affections, if, indeed, he ever had a share in them, by a much better man, to whom she was now said by the gossips to be engaged. This was Stuart Farnsworth, son of our postmaster and himself a new fledged lawyer not without clients.

"On the night of the robbery," said the detective, "Allen was seen and positively recognized within fifty yards of the postoffice just after the safe was blown, and he was running away. That's how sure we are of him. The man who saw him had sense enough to keep dark about it except to the postoffice authorities. He didn't even tell the police, for which we're much obliged."

It was a fact that Allen's name had not been whispered in connection with the affair.

"Now, here's a curious circumstance," continued Baxter. "The other robber was seen, too, but not recognized. He may have been disguised or he may be a stranger. At any rate we have his description, and we know that he carried a large black handbag. That bag doubtless contained \$8,000 and more of Uncle Sam's money. He had sense enough not to run, and Billy Stern, the lettercarrier, who was the man that saw him, had no idea that there was anything wrong with the fellow until after he heard that Allen had been seen running in the other direction empty-handed. Then the meaning of the man with the big bag flashed upon Stern's mind, and he told me."

"Does the description fit anybody hereabouts?" asked Graham.

"Except for a beard, which might have been false, of course," said Baxter, "it would fit Stuart Farnsworth, the postmaster's son, fairly well. And there's a point: Young Farnsworth might have known of the unusual sum of money in the postoffice safe. But he seems to have a fair alibi. He was calling that evening on a young lady named Annie Davenport"

"It lies in my mind that the robbery was past 12," said Graham, "and the young man would not be staying at Miss Davenport's so late."

"We learn that he left about 11," responded Baxter, "but the thieves were at work in the postoffice by 10 at the latest. It was better than a two hours' job on the safe. And now, Mr. Graham," he continued, "will you help me read this letter? It is in cipher, and we can't make anything of it. We have reason to assume that Allen has sent several to Miss Davenport since the robbery, and we think that we are justified in trying to get at the bottom of this puzzle. The young lady may be entirely innocent, of course. It's probable that she knows nothing of Allen's connection with the robbery or that he is suspected. There's doubtless some trick by which she is made to hand on these letters to the right party."

"I'd say the same to her if I was you," said Graham. "Then you'll be in the way of learning the inside of all this."

Baxter balked at this suggestion, but we succeeded in persuading him, and he set out for the house where Miss Davenport lived with her widowed mother. I gave him a note of introduction to the young lady and some rather severe admonitions as to his behavior, for I could see that he vaguely suspected her of some (perhaps unconscious) complicity in this affair. He was gone about two hours and returned both pleased and puzzled.

"This is a queer business," said he. "I'll be hanged if I understand it But here's the story: A few days after the robbery Miss Davenport got a note from Allen. He told her some sort of a fakedup story about being bothered by his debts and the noble resolve that he had made to pay them all. It was necessary, he wrote, that he should communicate secretly with a friend in this town. Would Miss Davenport receive the letters and simply hold them until the friend should come and claim them? She need not answer; he would take it for granted that she would do this small service for one whom she had once been gracious enough to count among her friends. Since then she has received five letters and has held them unopened on the theory that they were not for her. The friend has not appeared. I made her understand mighty clearly that this was a part of the postoffice robbery, and naturally she didn't like the idea. Here are the letters and her written permission for Mr. Graham to read them if he can."

"Give me the one that your gillie found on the street," said Graham. And Baxter laid it before him. It was a brief typewritten note consisting of a single string of jumbled letters and figures, as follows:

312fqpvlebsf2vq3pdnh4e2 oqxglzfu2mggrlvjfu2qwt lujnf2ykn n3frph.

"You didn't show anything like that in your article," said Baxter, grinning.

"I was writing for grown folk," rejoined Graham. "This is child's play. It's a mere shift of the alphabet. The figures divide off the words and also show the extent of the shift, which is different for each word. How simple! '3 1'—1 is the third letter after i; '2 f q p v'—f is the second letter after d, q is the second after o. The whole reads this way: 'I don't dare to make a move yet Keep quiet. Our time will come.'"

"That doesn't give us much light" said Baxter, "but we have the other letters, and there's no doubt they were intended for Allen's pal. If the same cipher is used, we've got" —

He paused as if stricken with paralysis. One of Miss Davenport's letters was open in his hand. The contents were blank paper!

It was the same with all of them; not a scrap of writing.

"Well, this knocks my eye out!" said Baxter. And then, with sudden energy: "These envelopes have been opened. I see the whole game. Stuart Farnsworth is the man. These letters were not kept under lock and key; they were scarcely out of plain sight—in a drawer of a writing desk in the Davenports' sitting room. Farnsworth could get at them without the girl's knowledge."

Now, this looked reasonable enough, except that a partnership in burglary between two bitter rivals in love would be somewhat of a novelty, especially with the young woman an unconscious assistant in the nefarious schemes. My credulity was hardly equal to the demand upon it, and when I thought of what I knew about young Farnsworth's character I rebelled utterly.

"There is one point," Graham was saying. "Allen wrote this letter and lost it. Of course he would write another. Has it been received?"

"Not yet," said Baxter.

Graham glanced at the clock.

"There's one more delivery today," he said. "It'll be due in a few minutes at Miss Davenport's house. Suppose we go up there."

Baxter accepted the suggestion, and we set out at once, reaching the house precisely in the nick of time.

Billy Stern was in the very act of delivering a letter to Miss Davenport at the gate.

Baxter, out of breath with walking, merely extended his hand for the letter, and*Miss Davenport gave it to him. The detective tore open the envelope and drew forth a sheet of blank paper.

"This is too much for me," said he. "I'll be hanged if I understand"—

He was interrupted by a sudden and surprising occurrence. Without the slightest warning Graham sprang upon Stern,

the carrier, and the two men came heavily to the ground. Graham was much the stronger. He seized Stern's right wrist and wrenched his hand open. A crumpled paper was disclosed. Baxter stooped and seized it, and I saw as he held it up that it bore a letter written in Allen's cipher.

Graham rose, pulled Stern up after him; then he faced Baxter.

"Why, man," he cried, "how could ye doubt who was at the bottom of this business? Did ye really believe that these letters were opened after Miss Davenport received them?"

"Do you mean that this fellow Stern has opened them," demanded Baxter, "that they were intended for his eyes, that the whole plot was between Stern and Allen?"

"Beyond a doubt," answered Graham. "Stern's description of the second robber was an obvious lie intended to throw dust in your eyes and cast suspicion upon an innocent man—young Farnsworth. Stern saw no robber but Allen until he came to a looking glass and saw himself. He's a trusted man in the office. He'd have a far better chance than the postmaster's son to know of the large sum in the safe. Did ye not think of that?"

Baxter slowly shook his head.

"I guess you're right," he said. "I remember trying to find Stern on the evening of the fourth day after the robbery, and on that same evening Allen got away from my watchers for a couple of hours. But I never thought that there was any connection between the two occurrences. They must have met."

"And on the next day Miss Davenport got the note from Allen asking her to receive the letters," said Graham. "It was a clever trick. Allen knew that he was watched. He dared not mail letters to Stern or even to a bogus name, for he knew you would trace them—in short, they had to be delivered to somebody. If they had been destroyed or held in the postoffice you'd have known that the other thief must be there."

He turned suddenly and seized the pale and trembling postman by the arm with a grip that made him wince.

"You'd just opened this last letter, eh?" said he. "And you had the inclosure in your pocket? Of course. And when you saw Mr. Baxter open the envelope you were afraid and tried to crumple the slip in your hand and toss it over the fence, but I nabbed you in time. Am I right?"

Stern tried to answer, but his throat was too dry. His face was a picture of guilt.

"Well, I guess he's the man, sure enough," said Baxter.

The rest was easy. Before the evening was over the two thieves were in custody and their plunder unearthed from the hiding place where Stern had bestowed it.

The Strategy of Love

BY HENRY LINSLEY DOOLITTLE

"The trouble with these magazine love stories," Jimmy was asserting, "is that they're not true to life. The real love of everyday people isn't interesting enough to spread over paper like so much honey upon bread."

"But there is plenty of true romance as interesting and as novel as the magazine plots," protested Valeria.

He glared at the heap of periodicals as if he had a personal grudge against one and all. "Ninety-nine out of a hundred of these yarns end up sugary in less than no time," he grumbled, "while in real life"—
"A man must wait until he is thoroughly in earnest," she finished.

Together they had mastered Monument mountain, one of the most precipitous in the Berkshires.

Jimmy picked up a handful of the current magazines and began a stubborn quest for examples to bear out his contention. If they were all so true to life, why hadn't he succeeded better?

"Take this story, for instance!" he cried. "A young lady wishes to test the sterling worth of a fellow whom she is about to meet, so she crawls along a back casement, gains admittance to his bachelor apartment through a moaning appeal to his mercy and, after receiving his promise of protection, admits that she is a fugitive lady's maid in posses-

sion of some of her mistress' finery. Just as the other conspirators knock, he hides her and bravely faces their charge of concealing a woman in his apartment. They depart, leaving in their wake all manner of base insinuations, and then, presto, my lady emerges and owns up to the test he has been made to undergo. Now, in real life he would have been too angry, and justly, to forgive her, but just see how the story ends." He pointed a tragic finger to the last paragraph of the story.

"However far-fetched that may have been," decreed Valeria, "it is but a single instance. Remember the Indian girl to whom constancy was dearer than life."

"Merely a legend," asserted the positive Jimmy.

"Oh, go away. You're as cynical as an old bachelor today."

He turned to another magazine. "Ah, here's a typical example," running his eye through the plot: "The heroine saves the hero from drowning in an ice hole. So far, so good—that might happen. Then he proposes, and, though she knew full well that he was in love with her and she with him and that for some time he had been on the ragged edge of coming to the point, she indignantly refuses him because of what people might say or think."

"Well, I am not so sure but that I should have done the same myself."

"No more skating for us on Prospect park lake," asseverated the other, with great finality.

"What happens next?"

"Why, then, mirabile dictu, by rare good fortune her gown catches fire while they are heatedly arguing the matter before a huge open fireplace, and he saves her life, thus balancing accounts. Oh, yes, a very pretty story, but in real life -bah!"

"It isn't fair to pick out only exaggerated examples," said Valeria.

"No," he admitted, "in a typical case the beautiful heroine would sprain her ankle. Thereupon the hero would enter in the nick of time to save her from some dreadful calamity, receiving her eternal love as a just reward."

She laughed indulgently.

Jimmy turned to still another magazine, remarking presently: "Here's a love story of another type—scene, an emergency Red Cross hospital. An injured army officer falls deeply in love with his nurse; but, as is often the case, he has a dependent mother. He frankly avows his position to the nurse, who, in

return for this confidence, refuses to divulge her true name and address. He asserts, nevertheless, that he will find her as soon as his circumstances admit, if he has to search the country through, and then — why what is the matter, Valeria?"

With a half startled gasp she clutched wildly for the magazine.

"Is the author's name Robert—Robert Franklin?" she whispered.

"Let's see. Yes, that's right Why?"

"Oh, don't ask me to explain," she begged. "Yet you have doubted, and I must tell someone. Will you promise will you promise never to tell a soul?"

Her halting words, low with intensity, struck a chill of premonition*to his heart. What so vital to her life lay concealed within that magazine story?

"Will you promise?" she repeated in that same tense whisper.

"Promise? Why, you know that I would promise you anything, Valeria. But for heaven's sake don't prolong the agony," added Jimmy, totally unconscious that he was at the moment as melodramatic as the maligned writers of love stories could picture a man.

"It all started at the time of the war," she began. "I was only 18 then, young and romantic. Yes, I suppose I mistook romance for patriotism," she pursued, reflectively, gazing far across the valley to Mount Washington, blue veiled in all the grandeur of the distance, "and suddenly I resolved to enlist as a nurse. Father would not hear of it—what did I know of the hardships involved? But I was silently determined, and I had my way too! Some relatives in Florida gave me the opportunity—I would visit them as a ruse. Am I tiring you by my preliminary explanation?"

"Oh, don't mind me," he deprecated ironically. "It seems I don't count in this game."

She smiled slightly, only to resume after a momentary hesitation: "Everything went my way, even to my gaining access to the hospital without the regulation requirements. You see, a nurse was taken ill just as I arrived, and I stepped into her place, filling it as best I might. And then 'he' came badly wounded, but, oh, so brave!"

She stopped short to fasten her roving eyes on Jimmy's face.

"Go on," he urged bitterly. "It is a great place for confidences, so far above the littleness of our everyday existence."

She turned to hide a smile, continuing: "I nursed him for three weeks, every day of which was harder for both of us. He insisted upon leaving that he would advertise broadcast for his nurse as soon as possible. I could think of nothing but newspaper personals, and I never read them, but he had been so original. He certainly has advertised broadcast, and instead of "paying for it he has made the advertising medium pay him!"

"Don't!" How can you be so trivial at such a time?" he implored.

Suddenly her mood changed to one of bitter self-denunciation.

"Won't you forgive me, Jimmy?" she begged. "Oh, how I have lied to you, all the while leading you to believe in my perfect sincerity! Won't you forgive me — and forget?" Impulsively she rested both hands on his shoulder.

"I forgive you," he repeated, "but I can't say the rest. I guess you know why, Valeria."

Again her mood changed, like the mood of an April day.

"Now will you admit that true romance sometimes lies between the covers?" she playfully demanded.

"I'll admit anything you wish. You can't hurt me deeper."

"Oh, goody!" She clapped her hands in ecstasy, then, slowly rubbing her eyes, added lightly, "Now that you've owned up to being in the wrong I may as well admit that I've had such a pleasant dream." As she finished speaking Valeria regarded him cautiously.

"Do you mean to say that you fashioned that out of whole cloth as you went along!" he demanded in bewilderment.

"Why, yes; I suppose so. But I gave you a good fit, didn't I? I just had to do it to show you what might have happened in real life, for it is not polite, you know, to contradict a lady."

"I've a good mind to shake you."

"It isn't polite to shake a lady either," was the ready retort.

For a moment he was silent.

"You aren't angry, are you?" she coaxed. "You know you just said you'd forgive my fibbing. After your savage arraignment of the girl who crawled along the back casement to trap a man I was afraid you might have as poor an opinion of me, so in self-protection I had to get your advance promise of forgiveness."

"But there is such a thing as adding insult to injury," he muttered almost crossly.

"It was such a pretty romance. You oughtn't to get angry; really you oughtn't," protested Valeria.

Jimmy seemed to be busy pondering some new point. "How in the deuce did you know the author's name?" he asked at length.

"I read the story yesterday. That was easy."

"Well, I'll be"—But exactly what he would be did not transpire.

"Wasn't that a pretty romance?" she persisted.

"Why, you're a whole romance and theatrical troupe combined," answered he, with a sigh of relieved admiration, "only don't do it again; don't, Valeria."

"And how jealous you were of my army officer! Now I know that you really do care for me, silly boy."

To conceal a smile that would play hide and seek about her lips she dropped to her knees and began searching the grass.

"Did you ever find a four-leafed clover, Jimmy?" she asked at last, with a sidelong glance to catch his mood.

He was gazing across the peaceful landscape, apparently unconscious of her absence from his side. At the question he turned abruptly and shook his head.

"If you haven't perseverance enough even to find a four-leafed clover you shouldn't expect to win out," she decreed severely.

He dropped down beside her, uprooting whole handfuls of clover leaves in his eagerness to disprove her verdict. For a time neither spoke.

At last she stole a glance in his direction. He had abandoned the quest and was sadly watching a thin ribbon of smoke, all that could be seen of the afternoon express on its downward journey through Great Barrington to the city.

"Why are you so lugubrious?" she ventured.

"Do you really want to know why I am cynical today? Perhaps I had better tell you—in fact, I brought you here to explain and to ask your advice."

"Why, what has gone wrong, Jimmy?" At once her voice and manner were warm with sympathetic interest.

"I just heard from dad this morning, and a nice sort of letter it was. He wants me to start for San Francisco tomorrow. You see, his western business is badly snarled, and he has ticketed me through to unravel the knots. If I go it may mean a big feather in my cap, while if I stay"—He shrugged his shoulders.

"You would have to leave on the morning train?" demanded Valeria.

"That's about the size of it."

"And miss all the good times we had planned for this week?"

Jimmy nodded.

"Then don't go. Oh, what have I been saying? Yes, go—of course you'll go," she insisted. "What right have I to keep you from success? And, when you are miles away, remember that I did not try to turn you from your duty."

She shivered as the shadow crept over the mountain top.

Lazily Jimmy rubbed his eyes. "Come to think of it, I guess that was only a dream too," he meditated aloud.

"Jimmy Castleton, do you mean to tell me that—that"— She could get no further.

"Confession is good for the heart, but you must remember that you it was who taught me the trick of borrowing from between the covers. It's the first real benefit I've ever derived from magazine stories. I shall take more interest in future. I watched you narrowly—that's what the hero does, isn't it?—and I saw my heroine turn pale, as sure as fate!"

"I didn't! Besides, it's only the villain that watches narrowly. I wouldn't be such a copy cat," she concluded, with withering scorn.

"You did turn white, though," he persisted, in no way abashed. And then he went on to add, using her very words with deliberate aggravation: "Now I know that you really do care for me, silly girl I didn't think that you, of all persons, Valeria, would tumble into your own net so easily."

"It was just horrid of you to take such a mean, spiteful revenge on me," she cried, her gray eyes flashing storm signals that awakened Jimmy to sudden misgivings.

"Oh, come, now, let's call it quits," he urged. "I'll forget the whole afternoon, if you say so."

She turned away in silence.

With a childish gesture of disgust he hurled the innocent but offending magazine over the cliff.

Still she would not speak.

"Just my luck to make almost a home run and then be put put out of the game for talking too much. The devil must have been preaching to me from yonder pulpit," he said resentfully. Then, straightening up with fresh resolution, he added: "I will go to San Francisco now, if that will do any good. Will that do any good, won't you tell me, Val?"

He was so wistfully in earnest that Valeria dimpled into smiles.

"Even there you would know that I— that I—you ought to be ashamed of yourself for scaring me into giving myself away before you had learned to ask me in the proper spirit," she finished lamely, but this time her gray eyes were kindled with a light that portended no storm.

And then—and then— But, as Jimmy has contended, the real love of everyday people isn't interesting enough to spread over paper, like so much honey upon bread.

Doctor Bemerton

BY ELINOR MARSH

"My dear," said Dr. Joe Bemerton as he threw off his coat and hat, tossing his heavy driving gloves into the latter, "I'll be hanged if I go out again tonight if I'm called by a multimillionaire!"

"Oh, Joe, I'm glad! You look awfully tired, and just think how long it is since we've had a quiet evening together!"

"Right you are, Pol. I'll get on my velveteen jacket, put on my easy shoes, sit down before these blazing logs with you beside me, and we'll have a real old-fashioned evening—like our courting days, eh, sweetheart?"

He tweaked her ear and gave her a kiss.

"Won't it be nice? You can sit in the big chair right before the flame, while I sit in my little working rocker beside you and darn the stockings."

"Oh, no; don't darn stockings! You didn't darn stockings in those days."

As soon as dinner was over the doctor pulled the big chair up to the fireplace and flung his wife down on his knee. She had weighed 100 pounds when they courted. Now she weighed 150. Bemerton had had several obstinate cases during the day and was tired. It wasn't five minutes before he remarked that he had strained a muscle in his left leg when getting out of his auto, slipping on a bit of ice. He thought that they'd better sit side by side. So Mrs. Bemerton got off his knee and with an effort succeeded in squeezing in beside him. If she had gained fifty pounds he had gained more, so that instead of the aggregate bulk of 215 pounds between the two arms of the chair, as in their courting days, there were now 350. However, they managed to wedge themselves in, and Mrs. Bemerton leaned back on her husband's arm.

"Just as nice as ever it was," he said gallantly.

They sat chatting for awhile, but the topics they talked about as lovers did not seem to rise up with the spontaneity of former days. There were long gaps in the conversation. The doctor yawned.

"We don't need to talk all the while," she said drowsily. "Remember what a clatter we used to keep up?"

"I wonder how we did it"

"Did it! We didn't do it. It did itself."

There was a lull, during which the doctor's eyes closed, and he was beginning to draw the heavy breath of slumber when his wife started in anew.

"Do you know, Joe," she said, "that wretched butcher sent in the most abominable steak this morning—all bone and gristle?"

"Yes, dear, but my arm is cramped. If you'll rise a bit I'll move it."

He moved the arm and was sinking again to a snooze when the telephone bell rang.

"I'll go," said Mrs. Bemerton, starting up.

"No; you wouldn't understand."

And the doctor went to the telephone. "Yes, I'm Dr. Bemerton."

Reply.

"I'm pretty tired."

Reply.

"Is he?"

Reply.

"Suffering much?"

Reply.

"Well, I suppose I'll have to go."

Mrs. Bemerton, who was listening, sighed. The doctor came back into the room the picture of woe.

"Now, Joe, you said you wouldn't go out again tonight for a millionaire. You're tired out. In another moment you'd have been asleep. Why didn't you refuse?"

"How could I? If you were suffering and called for a physician to relieve you and he declined to go, what would you think of him?"

"Well, I suppose it can't be helped. Will you ride?"

• "No; it's not far. I'll walk."

She helped the poor man on with his overcoat. He gave her a parting kiss and as he went out said:

"If I'm going to be delayed I'll telephone you, and you're not to sit up, but go to bed like a dear, good little woman, and I'll come in without disturbing you and sleep in my own room. Ta-ta, sweetheart!"

Mrs. Bemerton's regret was that her liege lord must go out after a hard day's work into a cold night to incur more responsibility. She was a practical woman and had discovered very soon that the return to courting days "would not be a success.

As soon as the front door closed behind him, Dr. Bemerton hastened his steps. A few blocks away was his club, and thither he went. Leaving his overcoat at the coat room, he went into the cafe and there found Drs. Nichols and Gilson, who hailed his entrance with shouts of satisfaction.

"What did you mean," exclaimed Bemerton to Nichols, with mock severity, "by telling me that the patient was suffering and I must come at once to relieve him?"

"I mean this," replied Nichols—"that Gilson is suffering for some one to split a bottle of ginger ale with him. As for me, I'm suffering for something of the same kind."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Bemerton. "You fellows will be the death of me some day. It doesn't seem as if one of us can have any fun without the other two or any two without the other one."

Dr. Bemerton sat down, and Nichols pushed the button, and when beverages had been ordered Bemerton said to the waiter:

"Peter, I wish you to telephone my wife that the case is very serious, there are three doctors in consultation, and I'll probably be detained till a late hour. Say I haven't even time to do the telephoning. Now, be careful, Peter. Don't give it away where the message comes from."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Nichols. "Three doctors in consultation! Good! Very good!"

"Consulting as to which is preferable

as a diluent—ginger ale or fizz water," laughed Gilson.

Peter had served twenty years at the club and knew how to send such telephone messages very well, but he was head waiter, and his responsibilities were multifarious. Being especially crowded tonight, he transferred the order to a greenhorn who had worn the club's button but a few days. This was the message sent to the doctor's wife:

"Dr. Bemerton is here at the club in consultation with two other doctors. He won't be home till late, mum."

"All right," came the response. "Tell the doctor not to hurry and that I think a Welsh rabbit or a stuffed crab will do him good."

Then the greenhorn goes to the three doctors in consultation and says to Dr. Bemerton:

"Dochter, Mrs. Bamerthon says yer not to hurry, and she thinks a stuffed crab or a rabbit'll do ye good."

Bemerton, who was raising his glass to his lips, stopped it on the way.

"Who phoned her?"

"I did, sor. Peter told me to. He was busy."

"And did you tell her I was at the club?"

"Shure, sor. Where else would I tell her?"

Nichols and Gilson leaned back in their leather-covered chairs and roared.

"That'll do," said Bemerton to the waiter, who went off puzzled.

"Well, boys," said Bemerton, "I'm in for it." And he told the story of how he had started in for a return to courting days, accusing them of breaking in upon his and his wife's happiness.

"You must do something mighty nice," said Gilson, "to get out of this muddle. My wife would never forgive me for a thing like that."

"What can I do?" asked Bemerton.

"Give her a sealskin," suggested Nichols.

"She has one. Besides, that would require time. I've got to face her tonight when I go home."

"The only thing you can do," said Gilson, "that can be done tonight is to telephone to a flower shop and have it send you a fine bouquet of flowers to take home with you."

Bemerton was not favorably impressed with the plan. He said that he had forgotten every anniversary of his wedding day as it came round and the customary gift, his wife reminding him of it a month after it had passed. To take her flowers now seemed like giving her taffy. However, at that hour it was the only thing he could do; so, calling up a flower shop, he directed the proprietor to send the handsomest basket of flowers he could make up. Then he threw off care and, with his friends, spent a delightful evening, marred only by a telephone message from Dr. Gilson's better half to know if he was at the club and one from a patient of Dr. Nichols asking if the medicine he had ordered had better be taken at 11 o'clock or a quarter past 11.

But all good times must come to an end, and the trio at last separated. At the door of the club Bemerton's two friends admonished him to do a lot of petting when he got home, confessing himself a brute and relying on the floral gift to set matters right. Bemerton didn't say anything. He knew his wife and that she was not one to be coddled.

When the doctor opened his front door he found the lights turned down and the silence of oblivion. Excellent! Perhaps his wife was asleep. He would not have to face her till morning. Taking off his shoes and leaving the flowers in the hall, he crept upstairs.

"That you, dear?" came a voice from his wife's bedroom. "Had a good time? Hope you didn't eat anything to upset your stomach."

"Only stuffed crab, as you suggested. You're not angry with me, are you, dear?"

"Angry! Why should I be? I was well pleased when I learned you were at the club instead of being with sick people. Only you might as well have told me where you were going. It would have been a relief to me."

"By Jove, what a sensible woman you are! Both Gilson and Nichols said their wives would be furious. They suggested that I bring you a ten dollar basket of flowers to pacify you."

"Flowers! Don't you bring me flowers when Billy needs a new overcoat and Jennie hasn't a decent dress to her name. If you had spent \$10 for such worthless things I'd have sent them right back tomorrow to the shop you got them from."

Mrs. Bemerton didn't see her husband or his expression when she said this, and it is well she did not.

"I'll just go down and fix the furnace before turning in," he called. "It's going to be a cold night."

Mrs. Bemerton heard coal shoveled into the furnace, but she did not hear a beautiful ten dollar basket of flowers thrown in at the same time.

The next morning Dr. Bemerton made his first call at the flower shop, where he paid for the penitential gift.

The Social Ladder

BY ETHEL HOLMES

A stagecoach lumbered up a zigzag road in the Rocky Mountains. On the outside seat behind the driver sat a gentleman whose eminently respectable traveling suit and his clean cut features indicated that he was to the manner born. Beside him sat a young man in the costume of the country. His shirt was flannel; his hat was a sombrero.

On the next seat back sat a lady, the aristocratic gentleman's wife, and beside her a girl of nineteen, their daughter. The man in the sombrero was telling them about the mountains and its people and pointing out the more prominent peaks, to which the travelers listened with great interest.

The sun was hot, the pace was slow, and the two combined tended to make the driver drowsy. When the coach reached an eminence and started down an incline, instead of being wide awake to the dangers of mountain travel he was nodding. He not only failed to put on the brake, but dropped the reins. He was awakened by the shouts of the passengers behind him, who saw a terrible death staring them in the face. The horses, unchecked, started down the slope and were soon going at a breakneck pace.

The driver basely abandoned his post and, putting his foot on the iron step beside him, swung himself to the ground. The young man who had been pointing out objects of interest let himself down over the footboard on to the tongue, gathered up the reins, quickly remounted to the box, put on the brake and managed to reduce the pace sufficiently to enable the coach to turn a curve without going over a precipice. Then after a further short descent he brought the horses to a standstill. The first sensation that came to him after it was all over was feeling the arms of the aristocratic gentleman about his neck. One day a couple of years after this episode Mrs. Murphy and her daughter, while bowling along Ocean avenue at Newport, received a terrible shock.

"Oh, heavens, mother, there's Barton Keith! Look the other way, quick!"

Miss Murphy, pretending to see something to which she desired to call her mother's attention, pointed in the opposite direction from the young man, the carriage rolled by, and the women began to discuss the situation.

"What in the world could have brought him here?" exclaimed the mother.

"I would as soon have expected to see a Mississippi pilot."

"Bart has been a stage driver."

"He'll tell everybody here all about our antecedents."

"He won't know any one to tell."

"It seems hard to cut him after that affair you had with him."

"There have been changes since then. At that time father was building his little branch railroad. He hadn't got on to the main line."

"Well, I don't think there's much danger, considering that he can't have any entree here. Heaven knows what a time we've had even to get in on the outer circle. How can Bart Keith with no money get in at all?"

"He may be prosperous. He's well enough dressed."

"Yes, he quite looked like one of the swells. I wonder why he's here?"

That night there was a grand function at one of the "cottages," and the next morning Mary Murphy ran to her mother with a newspaper in her hand and her eyes wide open.

"For land's sake, mother, listen to this: 'Among those present at Mrs. Atherton's last night was Mr. Barton Keith.'"

"You don't mean it!"

"How in the name of conscience do you suppose he got in there?"

"I can't imagine. I know we couldn't get a bid."

"He must have a pull somewhere."

"Your father had a pull, but it didn't work. He offered Peter Jones a tip on the stock of our road if he'd get him an invitation to the Athertons'. But Pete said they were of the old New York blue blood and rich besides. These people who have both blood and money are the hardest of all to move."

"Oho! Here's the explanation!" and she read a social item:

"Mr. Barton Keith is visiting Mr. and Mrs. Emerson Forbes."

"Oh, my goodness gracious!" exclaimed the mother. "How in the world did he ever get in with them?"

There was a silence between the two, which Mary ended by saying:

"Mother, we've gone and done it!"

"So we have."

"We must find a way to take a back track." "So we must."

"But we're entirely ignorant of the key to the position."

"What do you mean by that?"

"We don't know what reason the Forbes have for taking in Bart."

"Do you suppose they know what he's been?"

"Of course they do. Bart couldn't keep it if he wished. That's the singular part of it The Forbes have been prominent in New York and Newport society for a hundred years. But one thing I have noticed in these old families—they're more independent about whom they take up than any other people. I can't imagine those Perkinses, who made their money in fertilizing material, having anything to do with Bart Keith. You know how they snubbed us."

"Yes, indeed I do, and I'm waiting for the time to come when I can get even with them."

"But, mother, how are we to fix it up with Bart?"

"I don't know, Mame, unless you have the same power you used to have over him."

Mame cast a glance in a mirror. Art had done a great deal for her since she waited on the railroad men her mother fed in their days of poverty. Nothing that money could buy was now denied her. But she knew Bart Keith well. He had loved her in calico, and to love her in costly fabrics must incite an entirely new sensation. Besides, he was in the swim at Newport, where he would meet the finest costumes in America, to say nothing of the women they incased. To make matters worse, she had cut him.

"Mother," she said, "I believe I'll write him a line saying I've heard of his being in Newport and telling him we're here. That'll look as if we hadn't seen him on the avenue."

"Do you think he'd tumble to it?"

The girl pondered awhile, then admitted that she knew very well he wouldn't; their eyes had met and there had been a mutual recognition. She dared not write the note.

But one morning she received a note from Keith. He told her that, having heard she was at Newport, he had come on from the West to find her. But time had made great changes for both of them and he did not doubt she was following a course which seemed inviting to her in her new sphere. He shrank from parting with her without letting her know that he had kept the boyish promises made years ago. He refrained from mentioning the cut she had given him, but it was evident it was this that had turned him from her. He closed his epistle with the word "farewell," and she knew that he had passed beyond recall.

For a time the Murphys heard that Keith was being introduced under the wing of the Forbeses. Then they began to hear his name mentioned among the people and in the society notes independently of his introducers, and it was not long before they learned that which travels on the wings of the wind. Keith was rich. He had become interested in certain western speculations with Mr. Forbes, and the two had made money

together. Then came a rumor that Keith was to marry Miss Alice Forbes.

Up to this time the Murphys had merely wondered. Now they were astonished. And over Mary Murphy came a wave of regret. It was not for the loss of Barton Keith's wealth or position; it was for Keith himself. The prize they sought for and for which she had snubbed the lover of her young girlhood every day seemed farther from her grasp. Despite their millions the Murphys found it impossible to effect an entrance into Newport society. Mary had become accustomed to wealth, and it failed to satisfy her. She was hungry for the boyish love that had been hers in poverty, but she had thrown it away.

The report that Keith was to marry Miss Alice Forbes proved true. When the engagement was formally announced the Murphys read in the society columns of a New York newspaper a story concerning the contracting parties that gave them the key to the situation. It told how Mr. and Mrs. Forbes and their daughter were traveling in the Rocky Mountains, how a stage driver fell asleep, how a young man who had been formerly a handler of the ribbons saved the passengers from death, how Mr. Forbes had taken him up and enabled him to make a fortune. But the story did not tell the most important feature that had led to the union—a young girl seeing an act of cool bravery on the part of a young man.

The wedding of Barton Keith and Alice Forbes was not celebrated with that splendor usual to nuptials in the fashionable world. It was said that this was in deference to the wishes of the groom, who bore the reputation of being an extremely modest man. He devoted himself to business, his only recreation being driving four in-hands, and this was supposed to be in memory of experiences of former days.

"Mother," said Mary Murphy one day, "I have a plan."

"What is it, Mame?"

"We can't break through the shell of this Newport egg. We must go elsewhere."

"Where shall we go?"

"To London."

"Good gracious, daughter! If we can't succeed here, how can we do so among the British nobility?"

"Others who have failed here have succeeded there. Leave it to me. Money, dear mother, is the power that opens doors wherever money is needful. These British nobles are getting poor. Our people are getting rich. Many here have always been rich, and some care nothing about becoming richer. In England commoners have been getting rich, while the nobles have been getting poor. Noblemen would prefer to marry an American to a commoner of their own country, there being no titles here. I shall go to London, marry a title and come back here for just long enough to snub those who have snubbed us."

Two years later Mary Murphy returned to Newport as the Countess of Munkennon. Her advent was heralded, and when she arrived invitations were piled on her table. Before looking for those she intended to accept she picked out those from certain people who had snubbed her as Miss Murphy and sent immediate "regrets."

A Race for a Stake

BY ALAN HINSDALE

A number of persons stood on the front porch of a summer hotel near Washington, now looking at their watches and now up the road as if expecting something or somebody. Among them was a young lady dressed evidently for an automobile ride.

"If he gets here at 3 o'clock he'll be an hour ahead of time," said one.

"What time is he due in Washington?" asked another.

"At 6."

"What's up on it?"

"Oh, nothing valuable. It's a gentleman's race against time. A dozen pairs of gloves are all there is in it."

"Here he comes now."

The last one of these remarks was scarcely spoken before a minute cloud of dust was easily discernible up the road. An automobile appeared a mere speck and began to grow in apparent size. In another minute it pulled up at

the steps of the hotel. A young man jumped out, calling for gasoline and such other automobile equipments as he needed. The lady mentioned stepped up to him and said:

"Mr. Champlin, I believe."

"I am," replied the auto man, bowing and trying to get hold of his cap to pull it off.

"My cousin, Humphrey Cook, knowing that I was here, that I adore automobiling and that I wish to go the city, has written me that you would stop here and possibly would take me in."

Mr. Champlin hesitated.

"I'll be no trouble," the lady added.

"Really I should be delighted for your company, but in case of any delay I may have to proceed at breakneck speed."

"The faster you go the better I shall like it."

"Very well. I'm an hour ahead and if nothing breaks shall have no trouble in reaching the goal on time. Are you ready?"

"I am."

"Step in, Miss— I beg your pardon. I didn't get your name."

"Hood—Jacqueline Hood," replied the girl.

Mr. Champlin started. "Jack Hood!" he exclaimed.

"The same. Is there anything about Jack Hood that you don't like?"

"I've heard she's the worst feminine daredevil the world has ever seen."

"You've also heard probably that she knows all about an auto. Perhaps she may aid you in case of trouble."

By this time Miss Hood was settling herself comfortably in the auto, tying her veil under her chin. There was a singular look on Champlin's face. He had bet Humphrey Cook that he would drive his auto to New York and return by a given time. Might not Cook have sent this girl to delay him?

"I'm sorry, Miss Hood," he said, "but I've changed my mind about taking you."

"I haven't changed mine about going."

A bewitching smile hovered on her lips, and her eyes danced with mischief.

"Very well," he said, "I'll take you. But remember that in case there's any rascality perpetrated h shall treat you just as if you were a man."

Good! That's the way I wish to be treated."

During this scene the onlookers had gathered around the machine, and at the last words some of the men and all the women clapped their hands. Champlin got in, and the couple rolled away, followed by cheers and the waving of handkerchiefs. In another minute nothing could be seen of them but a tiny dust cloud.

For an hour Miss Hood entertained the driver of the auto in such a way as to make him forget everything but her. Nevertheless his eye was on the speed gauge and the clock, and nothing pertaining to win his race was neglected. There are women who can do more with a man in an hour than other women can do in a lifetime. Miss Hood simply absorbed him.

"Have you time to stop for a glass of milk?" she asked. "Certainly."

"Well, there's a farmhouse off the road up there. Would you mind getting one forme?"

Mr. Champlin stopped before the gate and went up to the house. A woman answered his knock at the door, and he went inside. He was no sooner out of sight than Miss Hood jumped out, took a small nickel-plated monkey wrench from her belt, unscrewed a nut and put it in her pocket. She had not finished her work before Champlin reappeared with a glass of milk in his hand. Miss Hood was awakened to his presence by hearing the breaking of glass on stone. Looking up, she saw Champlin the picture of astonishment and chagrin. He knew that he had been "done."

Striding with a quick step to the auto, he said sternly:

"You know what I said before leaving— that if there was any rascality perpetrated I would treat you just as I should a man."

"Oh, yes," she replied, making a face at him; "I remember that." "Give me what you have removed." "I decline to do so." Champlin made a dive for her. She

sidled around the auto. He followed, chasing her in a circle. She was too fleet for him. He was strong, but she was agile. At every step there would be the pretty face brimming with mischief, her eyes riveted on him that she should be ready for his slightest move. Finally he gave it up.

"Did Cook send you to do this?"

"Yes."

"Well, I suppose I shall have to lose the bet."

"That isn't necessary."

"What do you mean?"

"That if you ask me to give you what I have taken I will do so."

"On what conditions?"

"No conditions."

"No conditions! What do you mean?"

"I mean that I agreed with Humphrey for a dozen pairs of gloves to come out and delay you. Please don't ask me why; I prefer not to do so."

She cast down her eyes, and her meaning was plain. She had "gone soft" on Champlin.

She handed him the nut. He replaced it, and in another minute they were shooting again along the road. Champlin was delighted. Cook had very nearly got ahead of him—would have got ahead of him had it not been that the girl had taken so great a fancy to him that she hadn't a heart to "do" him. What a splendid joke it would be on Cook and the party who were present at the making of the bet when Champlin

and Miss Hood rolled up to the hotel

on time! Miss Hood hadn't even asked for the gloves her cousin had offered her to help him win them.

Champlin told her that as soon as he received the stakes he would give them to her and she could change them for ladies' gloves. Instead of being pleased at this, she appeared to be very much hurt.

Champlin begged her to tell him why, and she replied that she had not consented to be a turncoat for a bribe. This left him to understand that she had done it all for him. There was a very tender scene

between them, at the end of which the misunderstanding was made up, and for the rest of the journey Miss Cook held the steering wheel, while Mr. Champlin's arm was about her waist.

There were no more delays. On approaching the city, having still an hour's leeway, they concluded to stop at a convenient place and get the dust out of their throats with an ice. Champlin left the lady for a brief season while he poured out something more effective than an ice in doing away with dust. On rejoining her they partook of the ices and resumed their journey.

"What are you smiling at?" asked Miss Hood of her companion.

"Oh, I was thinking how surprised that cousin of yours will be when we roll up on time. That was a rascally proceeding of his, and it deserved to fail. If you hadn't been the dearest girl in the world it would have succeeded. But just think of his surprise when he hears the other part of it."

He managed to get hold of her hand with his left, holding on to the wheel with one hand, and they bowled along in this way until they met another conveyance.

And now the dome of the capitol with the figure perched upon it loomed up faint in the distance. It was not long before the outskirts of the city were reached, and half an hour before the time limit had expired they stopped at the ladies'

entrance of the hotel. A liveried servant advanced and said:

"Mr. Cook and a party of ladies and gentlemen are in a private dining-room waiting for you, sir."

Entering the room, Champlin expected to find Cook eager to know why his scheme had failed. Instead Cook handed his cousin a dozen pairs of ladies' gloves. After this he put out his hand to Champlin.

"I congratulate you, old boy, with all my heart on your engagement."

Champlin stood mute with astonishment.

"Champ, old boy," added Cook, "you need an explanation. To make you lose I sent my cousin Jack out to effect an entrance into your auto and delay you on the way. If she succeeded she was to have a dozen pairs of gloves for a reward. She has lost the gloves."

"That's plain," said Champlin.

"Well, there was a bet between Jack

and me of another dozen pairs of gloves against 100 cigars that she would make you propose to her on the way."

Champlin looked so many emotions, of which astonishment and shamefacedness were the most prominent, that all burst into a laugh, in which he finally joined. Then turning to Miss Hood, he advanced, with a puzzled, inquiring look on his face.

"Was it all a sham?" he asked.

She made no reply in words, but a slight color rising to her cheeks indicated that the brief period she had passed, even of a sham engagement, had not been unpleasant to her. Besides, Champlin was regarded as one of the best catches in Washington. Since he could get no word of confirmation he concluded to apply a test. Putting an arm around the girl's waist, he drew her toward him and kissed her. She submitted without a protest.

"It's a go!" shouted Cook, and there was a burst of merriment all crowding around Miss Hood to congratulate her, the men with handshakes, the women with kisses.

"Good for you. Champ!" cried Humphrey Cook. "You've won out all around. But the stake on the race is nothing compared with winning a wife. And you've got a dandy one, that can run anything, from a car to a man, and you'll find that she can take both the auto and the man apart and put them together again without the least trouble."

The wedding journey was an auto trip to California.

A Crop of Potatoes

BY F. A. MITCHEL

When the time approached for our going to our modest country home for the summer I had just parted with my fifth servant in as many months. I concluded to advertise for another. I wrote out a tempting description of the place, expatiating on the delicious country air and mentioning that the house stood in a fouracre lot.

I received just one reply. A few days after the issue of the advertisement a girl came to see me who said that she was looking for a situation. She was very plainly dressed, but there was an air about her that did not accord with her attire. She did not seem so interested in the wages I proposed to pay as in the place where she was to spend the summer. She asked me if there was room • for a kitchen garden, adding that she would like to try her hand at raising vegetables. When I informed her that she could have all the land she could plant, that the soil was excellent and had never grown anything but grass, she accepted the position, but on condition that she might be permitted to go to the place by the middle of April in order to get her planting done in season. It was not my intention to go to the country before the 1st of May.

Margaret, my new maid, agreed to fill her position in my household for the few weeks remaining till she was to depart for the country. She came one day at noon and cooked the dinner. I had told my husband that I had secured a prize, and when he saw Margaret and ate the dinner she had prepared he admitted that I was right in my assumption.

"But I fear," he said, "that she will be above her work. She is evidently not of the servant class. I can't exactly make out to what class she belongs; but, from her personality, leaving out the fact that she is a servant, I would place her well up in the social scale. I don't believe she will be satisfied to remain long with you."

"If she plants a garden she will have to remain with me," I replied, "till she has gathered her crop."

Margaret showed no disposition to be dissatisfied with her work so long as we were in the city, nor, for that matter, ever displayed such dissatisfaction. True, I treated her with more consideration than I had ever treated a servant before. But she did not exact such consideration and was always perfectly respectful to me though she never addressed me as "ma'am." It was always "Yes, Mrs. Ackerman," and "No, Mrs. Ackerman."

On the 15th of April my maid left me for the country. I supposed that she would fear to sleep alone in the house, but she said she might have a sister with tier some of the time, with my permission This I ot course granted. We

missed the delightful meals Margaret prepared for us, for she was the best cook I ever knew. I was glad when the time came to follow her, though my husband said that if she were to make a farmer of herself she would deteriorate as a cook.

When I reached my cottage I found Margaret domesticated. She was alone, her sister having gone away the day before my arrival. What was my surprise to see two-thirds of the ground laid out for a garden and a few sprouts here and there. I asked Margaret who had turned over the ground, and she said she had hired a farmer in the neighborhood to plow it and a friend of hers had leveled it. She had done the rest herself.

"What have you planted, Margaret?" I asked.

"I have put in a variety in that corner," she said, pointing, "for your table; the rest has been given up to potatoes."

"Potatoes!" I exclaimed. "What do you propose to do with so many potatoes?"

"Sell them. You see, Mrs. Ackerman, that the world's war is reducing the earth's products. Not only will this tend to raise the price of food, but speculators will make this an excuse to hoard their products, which will greatly enhance the market value. I have put in this crop on speculation."

I was astonished. A servant girl had secured a situation that brought with it a piece of ground and had used it to enter upon a speculation. Her action was predicated upon sound reasoning and business principles. My husband's prediction that I would find her above her business was true in one respect, but false in another. She knew her place as a servant, but was competent to act in a far wider field. As the weather warmed, the vegetables in Margaret's garden came up, and since both the soil and the weather were admirably fitted for the growth of potatoes there was every prospect of her securing a fine crop. The stalks were not too luxuriant, and Margaret said she did not fear that the crop would be mostly stalk with few potatoes. The corner that she had planted for our private use gave us such a variety of vegetable food as one could enjoy.

And this corner was of especial satisfaction to us because by midsummer Margaret's calculations on prices had begun to show themselves correct. We could not buy vegetables even from the farmers about us at prices we could afford to pay, and, as for potatoes, when the old year's stock had given out one would have been obliged to go without them had we not bought the few we needed from Margaret. When the summer was drawing to an end a man drove up in a wagon one morning and asked if Margaret Sayles was in. Margaret was out in the garden, and I sent him there. Later I saw him digging the potatoes, putting them in gunny sacks and loading them on to the wagon. I did not notice the man's appearance particularly, but he wore a slouch felt hat and a pair of overalls. I don't know how many loads of potatoes he took away with him, but he was all day at the work.

That evening I asked Margaret how she was coming out on her crop. She said that she believed she would do very well, since potatoes were increasing in price every day. I replied that I was well aware of the fact, to my cost. She added that she had been solicited by the neighboring farmers to hold her property for a better price, but had declined. She did not believe in the principle and would risk losing all she had made. The price might drop and the potatoes might rot on her hands. I told her I thought she was wise.

We returned to the city on the 1st of September. Margaret continued to serve me faithfully till the end of the year, when she notified me that she expected to be married in the spring and would leave me whenever I had found another servant to suit me. Of course this was a great disappointment, but I had no blame for Margaret. I asked her whom she was to marry, and she told me her betrothed was the man who had carted away her potatoes, adding that he was a practical gardener.

When she told me this I was sorry that I had not more carefully noticed the man. I was a trifle disappointed that she was

not to marry some one in a higher station, for both my husband and I clung to the idea that Margaret was fitted to fill almost any grade in social life. I asked a number of other questions about her betrothed, but she was as reticent about this as she had been about all matters pertaining to herself.

Margaret would not leave me till I had tried several persons to take her place. Finally I found a woman who was fairly satisfactory, and I insisted on parting with Margaret, for I knew that she wished to spend her time preparing for her wedding. I felt that I was losing a companion rather than a servant, and she seemed to have formed some attachment for me.

"Let me know when the wedding is to come off," I said.

"You will certainly receive an invitation," was her reply.

One morning in June it came. It was an engraved note stating that Mrs. Elihu Sayles would be pleased to see me at the wedding of her daughter, Margaret, at the residence of Mr. William Ferguson. There was nothing about it that bespoke the servant. Indeed, there was everything indicating that the parties concerned were of the better class.

On the day of the nuptials I drove up to the house of Mr. Ferguson, which I found on a first class residence street. Other vehicles were arriving, and those alighting were in costumes appropriate to a wedding in high life. There were perhaps fifty guests in all. At noon the couple took their position before the officiating clergyman, and in the groom, attired in a Prince Albert coat and gray trousers, I recognized the man who had carted away Margaret's potatoes. The bride was in traveling costume. After the ceremony I passed the bride with the throng of guests, and her mother, saying that she would like to make me acquainted with her brother, Mr. Ferguson, took me to him. He beckoned me to follow him to another room and then there explained the mystery of Margaret and her potato crop.

"If I were a young man seeking a helpmate," he said, "I should consider myself most fortunate if I could secure my niece Margaret. Her father brought her up in comfort, but practically. He considered the basis of a woman's education cookery, and sent his daughter to a cooking school. He died a few years ago, and she has since, up to the time she went to yoo, made her living by some plan connected with cooking. She became engaged to the man she has just married a year ago. He has been studying agriculture and has just been graduated, but had no funds. Seeing your advertisement, it occurred to Margaret that by accepting a position with you she might secure the use of ground without cost on which to raise a crop. She sold her potatoes for \$800, which is the capital on which the couple are to commence married life. Her husband will become scientific superintendent of a gentleman's farm at a good salary."

I was introduced to a number of Margaret's friends and relatives and found them all persons of refinement. Furthermore, they all spoke in the highest terms of her, not only praising her for her practical makeup, but especially commenting upon the absence in her of that false pride which prevents so many persons from accepting positions which are calculated to exclude them from social prestige. She did not hesitate to take a position which, though considered servile by the world, is perfectly honorable and furnished the key to fortune.

Margaret and her husband made a second step upward, occupying a cottage on the farm he managed, but it was not long before they had accumulated sufficient capital to buy a tract of land on which they planted fruit trees, and eventually made a fortune.

There is nothing to be added to my story except that Margaret has become one of my most valued friends.

The Man in the Corner

BY W. R, ROSE

The suburban car was making slow headway against the increasing snow drifts. It was nearly an hour behind its scheduled time. There had been some impatience expressed by the passengers, but finally they had quieted down as if determined to make the best of the situation. It was a well filled car, all the seats being occupied. In one of them a man and woman were sitting, the man next the window, the woman on the aisle. She had entered the car just as it was starting and there had been no other seat. She didn't like the looks of the man. He was dark and roughened by exposure and looked old and careworn. He had a sullen expression, she fancied, and his eyes were cast down. He seemed entirely oblivious of her presence.

She had given him a quick searching glance as she sat down, and she noticed a queer white line crossing his right temple and passing close to the outer corner of his eye. It might be a birthmark. Perhaps it was a scar.

She felt that she could inspect the man at her leisure. He paid no attention to her. Possibly this piqued her a little, because she was young, and, as a youthful admirer expressed it, easy to look at. The man sat huddled in the corner and gave no heed.

There was another young woman in the car a little distance away from the first girl, and the first girl had known her at school, and so had called down to her, "It's a pity we can't sit together." She had looked around at the man in the corner as she said this, but he had made no move. "He's the brute he looks to be," said the girl to herself.

The man had taken off his hat and put it in the rack. Now he leaned back with a little sigh and presently his eyes closed and he fell asleep. The girl didn't like this. She felt that it was a presumption on his part to sleep in her presence. She looked at him more freely. He seemed exhausted. He sighed a little as he breathed.

There was something hanging on his vest. His coat had become disarranged. He had a decoration of some sort. She wondered what it was. A fraternal badge, no doubt. She drew a little closer. There were words on it, French words. She stooped nearer.

Then the man suddenly awoke and stared at her and quickly drew his coat together and seemed to shrink further back in the corner.

Her face flamed. She felt still more incensed at the man. He had no business to sleep in her presence, and he certainly had no right to wake up in that unexpected way. What sort of badge was it?

The car was making slow progress. There was a snow plow coming to clear the track. It had a considerable distance to come. The time was 2 o'clock. They should have been in Ainsworth, the town at the end of the line, at 12.

The girl leaned back. There was nothing to do but wait. She was anxious to reach home. She had been on a fruitless errand and was tired and disappointed.

Time wore long. The passengers, most of them women, were very quiet. Now and then the rear door slammed as the restless conductor passed in and out. Then a rough voice suddenly arose in the rear of the car. It was the complaining voice of a bibulous passenger who had been asleep and now woke up and denounced the conductor and the railway management and the world in general. The voice of the conductor arose in mild expostulation. The rough voice became louder and rougher.

The motorman had left his cage and gone up the road to meet the snow plow. The conductor was a little man, mild and peaceful. His replies to the noisy passenger were conciliatory and feeble. The rough voice used profanity, strong profanity and highly unpleasant coarseness.

Then the dark man in the corner stirred uneasily and suddenly arose and looked down at the girl.

"Let me pass, please," he abruptly said. As she slid into the aisle she noticed that the man carried a heavy stick—she hadn't seen it before—and she saw, too, that he walked with a limp as he passed down the aisle.

The rough voice had grown noisier—and then it paused and began again—and stopped abruptly. The conductor's voice cried, "Look out!" There was a smacking sound, the noise of a heavy fall. Then the door slammed.

The limping man came back. The girl again slid aside for him and he dropped heavily into the corner. She looked at him timorously.

"You—your hand is bleeding," she stammered.

"Don't look at it," he sharply said. He had a bag on the floor. It seemed half bag and half box, and there was a long strap attached to it. He opened this and produced a flat box, and from it took a roll of adhesive plaster and a pair of surgeon's scissors. He cut off a piece of the plaster and fitted it to the bleeding hand. "That idiot drew a gun on me," he said to the flat case, "and I scratched my hand taking it away from him." He sat still for a few moments. Then he suddenly turned to the girl.

"If you feel anyways grateful to me for closing that foul mouth you can show it by unlacing my shoe. My foot has been hurting me confoundedly."

The girl drew back. This was altogether too much. Unlacing this ruffian's shoe! How dare he make such a request?

"Wh-which shoe?" she quavered.

"This one." He lifted it as he spoke. "The boy at the hotel laced it too tightly. It's been worrying me all day—and I can't stoop down far enough to reach it."

Her quick fingers unlaced the shoe. She gave a little gasp as she noted the tightly bandaged foot and ankle. Then she carefully retied the shoe.

"How was it hurt?" she asked.

"Ah, that feels heavenly," he sighed. "How was it hurt? Oh, a bit of iron fell on it." He noted her indignant look.

"It wouldn't have hurt anything," he added, "if it hadn't fallen so far—2,000 feet, perhaps."

He was fumbling in the bag and presently brought out an oblong tin box and opened it. A row of packages wrapped in silver paper were laying inside. He passed the box to the girl.

"Try a cake of chocolate," he said. She drew back stiffly.

"No, thank you," she replied. The man was presuming too far.

He did not appear offended.

"It is wonderfully good chocolate," he said as he nibbled at a cake. "I've never tasted any like it. I suppose there is as much nutriment in this piece as in an ordinary luncheon." He seemed to be addressing himself again to the kit bag. "It was given me by a woman in Paris." He paused. "She ran out from the sidewalk as I was passing by and put the box in my hand, and said in French—well, I can't tell you how she said it 'You are so like my brave Andre.'" He looked around at the girl. "She was dressed in black, you know." There was a little silence. He looked back at the bag. "She burst out crying," he softly said, "and reaching up she pulled me down and kissed me and ran away." He drew a long breath. "French mothers are rather emotional you know."

The girl's voice shook a little.

"The poor mother thought you were like her dead son?"

"Yes. It surprises you, perhaps. No doubt you think me older than I am. I have been where men grow old very fast." He faintly smiled. "I'm quite ashamed to say that I'm only 25."

The girl was silent for a moment.

"I think," she very softly, "that I'd like a piece of that French mother's chocolate."

He passed her the box.

"I find it refreshing," he said. "I'm not very fit, you understand. I fell asleep just now. That was inexcusable. Still I have an excuse, lame as it is. Coming over on the boat I found a Belgian woman with two children. She was a poor little thing—husband killed, home burned, and one of the children ailing. There were friends who would meet her in New

York, but the ocean trip was a hard one. She had more than her hands full, so I took charge of the younger child. I kept him with me all the way across—just a little cub of three, you know. I suppose I fussed too much over him—anyway, I didn't get a full allowance of sleep. The little chap made it as easy as possible for me, no doubt, and when they took him away from me he roared like a young lion. The mother was very grateful. Of course, she had to cry and kiss me." He made a queer grimace. "They can't help it, you see."

Quite unconsciously the girl had drawn a little closer to the stranger. The picture of the wakeful man bending over the child in the close stateroom seemed to draw her. The man was rough and hard—but was he?

She drew a long breath.

"That poor mother," she said softly. "How can such things happen?"

"It's a question they are all asking," returned the man. "There was a young Englishman that I got to know pretty well. He was a born poet and a dandy fighter. He used to ask the same question. He asked it in verse. Here, perhaps I can remember part of it." He paused a moment and then repeated these lines:

Thou who ruleth over all.
Marking, too, the sparrow's fall,—
• We have made a mock of thee
On thy land and on thy sea,—
Painting: thy white blossoms red.
Fouling: thy sweet air o'er head.
Covering deep thy gracious earth
With crops of death and dearth,—
Hear us, as we call to thee—
Why should all these horrors be?

There was a brief silence. "I think he knows now," said the man softly.

"Knows?"

"He was killed at Cambrai."

The girl shuddered and drew back.

"I should not tell you these things," said the man. "They must prejudice you against me. But that's not to be wondered at." He smiled in his whimsical way. "Of course you can't be expected to feel kindly toward a man who orders you to unlace his shoe. Yet if you hadn't unlaced it I should have begun to scream."

He smiled again. "You don't like me, do you?"

"I don't know," said the girl.

"I know," he answered. "But there, it doesn't matter. Where do you live?"

"At Ainsworth."

"Ainsworth! That's where I'm going. I have a letter to deliver. Perhaps you can help me to find the place." He drew an envelope from his pocket and showed it to her. With a cry she snatched it.

"Why, it's for me!" she said.

"You!" he stammered. "Are you his kid sister?"

But she did not heed him. She was busy with the letter. Swiftly she scanned it "I'm sending this by old Jim," she read. "He's on sick leave and in order to get him away they detailed him on special business. Be

very good to him, sis. There never was a kinder, braver, sweeter fellow. Only don't scare him away. Do you see that scar on his face? That was meant for me, but Jim got in the way."

The girl looked up at the man. Her eyes were swimming.

Then with a quick movement she leaned forward and kissed his rough cheek.

"We can't help it, you know," she half sobbed.

— Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Flanagan's Boy

BY CLARISSA MACKIE

"Larry will never be coming home," sighed Dennis Flanagan as he looked out into the March twilight. "It's five years since he went away to seek his fortune, Molly, and do you never wonder what he's found?"

Molly Delaney looked at her uncle through unshed tears.

"I am always wondering that, Uncle Dennis," she answered.

"Light the lamp, Molly, and read his latest letter," requested Dennis.

When the lamp was lighted it disclosed a comfortable sitting room, clean and cozy and warm. It showed Dennis in his big rocking chair, his helpless rheumatic feet propped on a stool. Lovely Molly Delaney, with her misty black hair and her Irish blue eyes, sat down at the table and opened the worn envelope that contained Flanagan's letter and read:

Dear Father—Although it's five years since I left you with high hopes in my heart that my returning would be soon. I fear that I must wait a little longer before seeing your dear face again and feeling the hearty clasp of your hand. Gold is an alluring jade. She has led me a pretty chase in this bleak, cold country, and now she is only just in sight. Please God. when next I write it will be to tell you that I have struck it rich, that I am coming home to buy a grand house for you and Molly, and we will all be happy together. Remember that I promised Molly that when I came home I'd bring her a bunch of emerald shamrocks, the real jewels, and now they are just within my reach. A boy from Hazenville is due here tomorrow, and with his coming I expect to hear direct news from you both. With love from your dutiful son, Larry.

Molly lifted her eyes and looked across the table at Dennis Flanagan.

"Uncle Dennis, I'm afraid that Larry will never come home," she whispered.

The old man lifted a tremulous hand.

"Hush, child; I've a feeling that Larry will come back to us. I had a dream last night. I thought there came a knocking at the door and I opened it to see our Larry. Instead of wearing fine clothes and a silk hat, poor Larry was in rags. And instead of pinning a bunch of emerald shamrocks on your bosom, where they'd be out of place on that flimsy cotton gown, my dear, our poor Larry carried a little pot of the living green plant from old Ireland. And then I woke up."

Molly was sobbing softly.

"I don't care how poor he is, Uncle Dennis, if he will only come home to us."

"No more do I, childie," whispered Dennis.

"Don't sorrow, Uncle Dennis," comforted the girl, slipping to her knees beside him. "Larry will soon come home. If this last quest for gold should prove useless, I can see him turning about and coming back to us. Between the lines of his letter I could read that he was hungering for the ones he had left behind."

"God bless you, daughter," smiled Dennis more cheerfully.

The Alaska twilight had fallen swiftly like a dull gray blanket tossed over the frozen world; then a ghostly moon appeared over the eastern mountains and revealed bleak expanses of glistening snow and the dark masses of pine trees.

Under the shoulder of the hill crouched a little cabin, and before the blazing fire on its hearth two young men were sitting. The "boy from Hazenville" had arrived, and Larry Flanagan was listening to his story of home and the home folks.

"And my old father helpless with the rheumatism?" repeated Larry incredulously. "Why, Mike Dolan, the old scout never wrote a word of it to me! But, thank heaven, the railroad stocks will keep him comfortable, but"—

Mike Dolan looked at the big framed man, whose brown hair was graying on the temples and whose handsome face had taken on new lines of doggedness during the past five years. Was it possible that Larry did not know that the little western railroad had blown up and that old Dennis Flanagan's stock was worthless?

"Larry," he interrupted soberly, "didn't you know that the railroad busted and your father lost every penny?"

"You lie!" cried Larry savagely, for he was struck to the heart by the news.

Mike Dolan smiled pityingly.

"It's all true, Larry, and what's more true is that your little cousin Molly is a wonderful girl. When the bad news came the lass opened a millinery shop, and with her clever fingers she certainly has made money hand over fist. She's taken good care of your father, and"—

"Whisht, man," cried Larry in an agonized tone, "I cannot bear to hear any more! Look at me, Mike Dolan! Laugh at me! I came away to make my fortune. I said when I returned I would bring Molly a bunch of shamrock made from emeralds, with diamond dewdrops on 'em, and look at this!" He swept his arm in a gesture that included the four corners of the rough cabin. "Me, still striving to make good that promise, and Molly sweet little Molly Delaney—not bothering her dear head about emeralds or diamonds, but doing her duty day by day! Laugh at me, Mike Dolan, for I am a blind fool!" But Mike Dolan did not laugh.

On the 17th of March Dennis Flanagan and his niece sat down to supper. All day long Dennis had listened for the postman's ring at the doorbell, but in vain. There came a newspaper from his old home in County Antrim, Ireland, but beyond that there was nothing. Always before they had received some word from Larry in his faraway home, and, though the delay might be attributed to the mails and the heavy snowstorms reported in the northwest, Dennis was heavy-hearted.

"May the blessed saint whose day it is protect him wherever he is!" sighed Dennis as he took a cup of tea from Molly's hand.

"I'm sure we will hear from Larry in the morning," cried Molly hopefully. "Look, Uncle Dennis, at the sweet pot of shamrock I brought home."

Dennis looked at her keenly.

"Molly, lass, and do you not pine for the real emeralds, the jewels that Larry promised?" he asked.

Molly laughed scornfully. Her cheeks flushed rosily, and her blue eyes shone with love for the absent lover cousin.

"Uncle Dennis, you make me ashamed! Don't you believe I'd rather see a lad who has two green eyes—eyes the color of that bunch of shamrock—than all the jewels in the world? Those emerald eyes of Larry Flanagan's are the only jewels I would wear against my heart!" She hung her head in sudden sweet shame.

Dennis' wrinkled hand was stretched across the table toward her.

"Then Molly, lass," he whispered, "maybe it'll come all right, for again I dreamed the dream of Larry coming home, poor and needy instead of rich and"

"Who wanted him rich, Uncle Dennis?" cried the girl hotly. "We were satisfied, you and I. We pleaded with him not to go away and leave us. But there perhaps it was for the best, but there is an ache behind it all!"

"What is that?" Dennis lifted his head.

"The music of the band. The knights o' green are parading. Shall we go down to the corner of the street and watch them, Uncle Dennis?"

"Yes. 'Twasn't so many years ago that I marched with 'em meself on St. Patrick's day, and Larry—I hoped by this time he would be back among them, brave in a green and gold uniform. Help me on with my overcoat, dearie."

So the old man, leaning on the arm of the slender, upright girl, went down to the corner and with swelling heart watched the passing of the gallant knights who marched in honor of the good St. Patrick. As the tail of the procession passed out of sight Dennis Flanagan and his niece turned toward home. Molly knew that the old man's heart was far away in Alaska with the beloved son, who was vainly seeking the will o' the wisp, gold.

Tonight gold and the luxuries it brings seemed a tiny thing to the girl with the aching heart. Again they were seated about the glowing little stove in the sitting room when there came a soft knocking at the door to the porch.

Molly crossed the room and opened the door only to fall back against the lintel white lipped and staring. "Uncle Dennis, Uncle Dennis, I'm seeing visions!" she sobbed, pointing to the snow covered porch. Dennis hobbled to her side and saw the form of a man huddled on the door mat.

"Poor soul!" he muttered, turning the face toward the light, and then he fell back, with a startled cry.

"Heavens, Molly, it's our own Larry! 'Tis my dream come true!" he moaned.

Molly recovered her courage when she realized that she was actually needed to allay suffering. She rubbed the cold face with snow and poured a strong stimulant through the white lips. After awhile Larry opened his eyes, smiled, shook himself and slowly staggered to his feet.

When he was safely inside, supported on either side by father and sweetheart, he looked down at them from tender green eyes that were rarely beautiful.

Dennis and Molly looked at him hungrily.

Larry, who had gone forth so gallantly to seek his fortune, who had promised to bring back emerald shamrocks to deck his sweetheart's breast — Larry was shabby and obviously poor and undeniably hungry, for he was thin and pale and worn.

But he was Larry, come home to them once more!

Clasped in his father's trembling arms, Larry soothed the old man's excitement, while Molly hurried to and fro making a pot of strong coffee and broiling a piece of beefsteak.

When she had set the table with the meal Larry's eyes beckoned her across the room, and she came and stood before him.

"Molly, darling," said Larry in a low tone, "my fine promises are for nothing. I come home poorer than when I went away, and the emeralds I was to bring home, lassie"—his voice shook—"are missing. I find you have been as a daughter to my father. My heart is broken with the shame of it all, and"—Molly's soft hand closed his lips.

"Be still," she smiled at him, while Dennis chuckled in his corner. "Be still, Larry. You have brought home jewels to me worth more than emeralds. Your true eyes of emerald green are my jewels, and your love and constancy shall always grow green in my heart, and the little bit of living green yonder"—she pointed to the shamrock on the table—"is more to me than lifeless gems or cold gold."

While Larry held her close to him Dennis nodded his head at his son.

"'Tis true, lad. A good woman is above rubies, but our little Molly is far above rubies and gold and emeralds."

The Ticket

BY AGNES G. BROGAN

There was the girl again! Billy Thornton frowned at her sudden entrance into the car—not that there was anything about the fresh, interested countenance to call forth a masculine frown. Jane Wilder was exactly the opposite kind of girl. But Billy never had met her and was more anxious to meet her than for anything else in the world, and, though she was always appearing in most unexpected places in a delightfully disturbing manner, still she, the ideal, remained as far distant as some beautiful, wonderful star.

"How," mused Billy to himself—"how in the world could the proper meeting be brought about?" Sometimes he was pleased to fancy a responsive interest in the girl's glance of quickly veiled recognition in their several encounters. "How —oh, how?"

"So glad to see you, dearie," murmured an old lady, bending over his divinity from the seat behind. "You are on the way to the child welfare meeting, of course. How busy you keep yourself with everything of an uplifting nature! I don't see how you do it"

The girl laughed as she turned around, Billy's heart thumped in sympathy with the clear joyousness of the sound. Never had he heard her voice or laugh before, and in nothing was she disappointing. Recklessly he allowed the windows of his office, where Braydon was waiting to see him upon an important commission, to fade into distance. He would sit there in his seat until the girl left the car.

"Oh, I am not voluntarily busy," she answered the old lady, "just drawn into the work by my friends. Meetings are all this week, you know—evenings for the men. We must interest voters. Lillis is one of the ushers, so it was she who solicited my aid, the dean of our old college being tonight's speaker."

"I would like to go," the old lady responded. Eagerly the girl fumbled in her purse. "So sorry," she said at length. "I have no more tickets, and admission is all by ticket invitation."

She jumped to her feet. "My corner!" she cried. "Goodby, Mrs. West" It was then that Billy heard the coveted name.

"Goodby, Jane Wilder," said the old lady.

"Jane Wilder." Mentally he echoed the name. "It was like her somehow." To him it sounded quaint and sweet. He was planning as he brushed through the crowd in the streets to obtain tickets in some manner for that evening's "welfare" meeting. It would be in the auditorium, of course, and she had said by invitation only. He remembered reading an account of the affair in the papers. Former pupils of the college represented by the speaker were to act as ushers. Surely one might speak to an usher, and surely one might select one's particular usher. Billy began to whistle.

The low but merry tune seemed to annoy rather than cheer the tall young man who swung impatiently about in Billy's pet office chair.

"Great Scott!" Braydon ejaculated in greeting, "you come in more than thirty minutes late and happy as a May day! I went without my own lunch in order to get over here on time, while you"—

"Say," remarked Billy absently, "where can a fellow get tickets for tonight's child welfare meeting?"

Braydon's feet came to the floor with a bang. "What's the matter with you, Thornton?" he asked.

Billy waved the question impatiently aside. "Where can I get them?" he insisted.

"How the dickens do I know?" the man replied. Suddenly he glanced at Billy's eager face. "Why this unusual interest in a strange cause?" he asked.

Deliberately Billy seated himself in an opposite chair. "There is a girl," he answered seriously, "whom I am very anxious to meet. She will be there tonight. Among that old college crowd we must have mutual

acquaintances. If you can direct me to any one who might possibly have a spare ticket of invitation I'd be obliged. That's all."

His friend considered. "Why, there's Jack Maynard," he said. "His wife was a student at that college. I'll speak to him. Before we get down to business, what's the name of this girl, Billy? Might know her myself."

Thornton's eyes took on their previous reminiscent gleam. "Wilder," he repeated softly— "Jane Wilder." In the desperate hope of hearing from Jack Maynard he lingered in the office long past closing time and at last was rewarded by the appearance of a messenger bearing an envelope marked, with the date, "Ticket to auditorium meeting." Billy's sinking spirits soared to their highest level. That very evening he should see her again at least—that evening. There was not much time for dinner. The auditorium would be crowded.

For a moment as he waited in the entrance Billy's eyes roved excitedly among the white gowned tiers of ushers. Then at length he spied her. She was even more charming with her uncovered golden head than in the fetching hats of his remembrance, and—yes, she was coming slowly toward him. A rather stout woman usher put out her hand.

"Ticket, please," she demanded. But Billy smiled in the direction of the oncoming little figure.

"Waiting," he said. Miss Jane Wilder's gaze was entirely impersonal. Silently she accepted and read his ticket; then "Oh!" she breathed. Vaguely troubled, he glanced down at the golden head. Surprise, disappointment—what was it that showed for a moment in the eyes upraised to his?

"This way," she said, and Billy followed her down the aisle. But at the choice seat designated the stout overseeing usher reappeared.

"Must be some mistake," she argued loudly. "This section reserved for ushers and their husbands only. Let me see your ticket." Billy was about to apologize and withdraw—other fortunate possessors of nearby seats interestedly watched the outcome—when his director's voice sounded distinctly.

"It's all right, Mrs. Sayles," she said. "The ticket reads, 'Mr. and Mrs. Jack Maynard.' Mrs. Maynard is not here this evening, but she ushered at this afternoon's meeting."

Before Billy could collect his senses, before he could deny to the one girl in all the world this fatal imputation, the two white-clad women, whispering, moved away together. And to this end had his scheming led him. The girl whose love he craved was now, through a senseless mistake, removed from him forever. Henceforth he was in her eyes but the wedded husband of a certain Mrs. Jack Maynard. Why hadn't he glanced at the confounded ticket instead of rushing with it like a fool?

Despairingly Billy looked about, after the oration, if here he might still find one friend, perhaps also of her acquaintance, but all were strangers, not one familiar face. Broodingly he made his way to the door. Out in the vestibule he lingered to throw on his coat, and presently from a merry, chattering throng she made her way to him.

The wonder of her sudden presence there at his side, the smile that was unmistakably for him, held him for the moment speechless.

"I hope the evening has been a pleasant one," she said and held out her hand. Billy saw that the hand was extending to him a small white envelope and took it. Then his dream abruptly ended.

"A ticket for the mothers' meeting tomorrow, Mr. Maynard," she said. "Please give it to your wife."

Before his denying lips could even form a reply she had vanished. It was a decidedly grouchy Billy Thornton whom his tall friend found in the office the next day.

"Enjoy the uplift meeting?" Braydon casually inquired.

"The deuce!" answered Billy.

"As to that Miss Wilder," the friend went on. "Happen to know people who in turn know her. Take you over to meet her if you like."

Billy's grouch evaporated. "Tonight?" he asked crisply.

"Tonight," replied Braydon.

Billy banged down the cover of his desk in a spirit of joyful anticipation. In ten minutes he would explain all to her. And after that—well, if he didn't win out in the old game of love it would not be because with all his heart and soul he had not tried. He wished that Braydon would refrain from entering into that old business problem on the way to the house where he was to meet her. He wanted to go over in his mind the things that he would say.

Before he realized it they were in the brilliantly lighted reception room and he was bowing before a sweet-faced woman presented as Mrs. Jack Maynard, who immediately, taking Billy in charge, led him to a girlish figure at the farther end of the room.

"Miss Wilder," she announced rather absently and hurried back to his friend. The "one girl" smiled up at him.

"We are not quite strangers," she said, "but I am afraid you forgot to give the ticket to Mrs. Maynard. She was absent, I noticed from the afternoon meeting, and you"—

"Miss Wilder"—it was the interrupting voice of Braydon—"come here just a moment, please, to settle a dispute."

Billy savagely ground his heel on the rug as others came to claim the girl's attention, keeping her from him. When was this silly affair to be straightened? Where was the real Jack Maynard?

Interminably the evening dragged and no opportunity for a further word with the girl of his dreams. In her eyes he was now no doubt just the uninteresting husband of her hostess, while in his eyes -Billy rapturously caught his breath as he looked at her—she grew each moment fairer.

In sudden determination he crossed to where she sat before the piano.

"I want to talk to you," he said.

The girl's fingers rested upon the keys. Half turning, she looked up at him.

"I—I'm not Jack Maynard," Billy blurted out desperately, "and I'm not married. It was a confounded—I beg your pardon—only a borrowed ticket."

The laughing challenge of her eyes gave him sudden courage. "I have wanted—no, that's not the word—I have desired above all things for months to meet you," he went on, then paused. His eyes were saying more. "My name is Thornton," he ended abruptly—"William Thornton."

Miss Jane Wilder arose and stood before him. "I know it," she said quietly, "and I knew it all along. Back there at church that day a friend pointed you out to me. Yesterday when Jack Maynard asked for a ticket for you to the meeting it was I who suggested that he lend you his." She laughed softly. "It was wicked of me to pretend," she admitted — "wicked, but—it did not take you so long to bring this"—she paused and held out her hand—"about"

Fervently Billy grasped the proffered hand; fervently he bent to look down into the girl's face. Then deep and happily he sighed. "At last!" breathed Billy.

The Redfield Will

BY F. A. HITCHEL

When the late John Redfield's will was opened it was learned that all his property—a goodly fortune—was left to his daughter Anne, with the condition that she marry the testator's right hand man of business, Theodore Griffin. Griffin had been in charge of the Redfield company for some time before it's founder's demise, and since he was the only man who could squeeze a profit out of it there was no necessity for making any other provision for its management. Nothing was said in the will as to a refusal of Griffin to marry Anne Redfield. Her father when she was passing into womanhood had told her that it was his intention to give her a good manager for the fortune he would leave her, in the person of Griffin. Anne was then too young to consider the importance of the plan to her, and her father was led to believe that she would make no objection to it when the time came to fulfill the conditions. There was no doubt about Griffin's acceding to it.

This is why the will made no mention of a refusal on the part of Griffin to marry the heiress. If she refused to marry him the stock of the Redfield company, which would otherwise be hers, would go to Griffin. The residue of the estate would in this case be divided between several charitable institutions in which the testator had been much interested during his life.

Mr. Redfield died four years after mentioning the matter to his daughter. When he did so she was fifteen. At the time of his death she was nineteen. She had told some of her schoolmates that she was to marry Griffin and had made no objection to doing so. At that time it was a matter for the future, and she considered it a matter of course, as a boy may do who is brought up to understand that he is to enter a certain profession.

But when Anne Redfield at nineteen found herself an orphan and called upon to fulfill the conditions of her father's will, she was a woman and had a lover who had nothing whatever to do with the condition except that if she married him she would give up a fortune.

David Corwin was the young man who had stepped in to prevent John Redfield's well conceived plan from being smoothly worked out. David had been attentive to Anne for some time before her father's death, but Mr. Redfield was not observant, and quite often parents who are watchful fail to detect a love affair that is developing right under their nose* This one came to a head during Mr. Redfield's last illness.

When the will was read Anne was reminded of something the importance of which she had not realized and which, never having been mentioned to her since she was fifteen years old, she regarded as a dead letter. But even now it did not occur to her that Griffin would force himself upon her, she being unwilling. She sent for him and told him that she could not marry her father's choice for her without violation to her feelings. Griffin replied that he had promised her father to do his part in carrying out the plan; if Anne would not do her part he saw no way but that the property, other than the business, must go to the charities named in the will.

Anne consulted a lawyer, who told her that under the terms of the will she must marry Griffin to inherit her property. There was but one way out of the dilemma, and that was for Griffin to refuse to marry her. This would make the will inoperative, and she would inherit as heir at law, the same as if there were no will, she being the only child and there being no widow.

Anne did not understand the legal distinctions in the case, but she did understand that her inheriting her property and marrying the man she wanted depended on Griffin's declining to marry her. She sent for Griffin and reported what the attorney had said.

"This plan," replied Griffin, "was inaugurated by your father. It received my sanction, and he told me that you had made no objection to it. I would not be justified in thwarting it by putting you in a position

to render it inoperative. I regret that the carrying it out has become obnoxious to you, but that fact would not excuse me if I become a party to nullifying it."

"But father could have had no object in making such a will except to insure, so far as he could, my happiness. Four years ago he told me about this plan, and I gave my consent to it. Had I refused that consent I am quite sure he would not have made such a will. I was then a child. Now I am a woman. Father never intended that I should marry a man I did not wish to marry."

"Your father doubtless knew that your happiness largely depended upon the possession of the fortune he had been at such pains to build up. He was aware that a girl of your age is not able to manage a large concern. His money is all invested in the business, and every one knows that a business without a manager will soon go to ruin. If you marry a man who is not capable of managing yours you will be reduced to poverty. I am sure I am warranted in saying that no man is capable of managing it who has not been brought up for the purpose. Your father brought me up for that very purpose. His object in providing in the will that you should marry me was to insure to you the enjoyment of the wealth he was leaving you. Had he left you free to marry whom you liked you would doubtless have married some young man utterly unfitted to manage a fortune that was tied up in a very intricate business. The result would have been what I have said—ruin for the business and poverty for you. He brought you up with the understanding that you were to marry the manager of the business he left you."

This sounded so plausible that for the time being Griffin appeared in Anne's eyes a very noble man. It seemed to her that she was the guilty one in not carrying out her father's wishes, to which she had tacitly consented. Nevertheless her whole being rebelled against a marriage with Griffin. Indeed, it was not to be thought of. She would marry the man of her choice even if she must relinquish a fortune. She was quite sure he would marry her even if she were poor as a church mouse.

But Anne found on consultation with others that they were not disposed to take her view of Griffin's noble motives in not permitting her to enjoy her inheritance with the man she loved by refusing to marry her. Her lawyer told her frankly that Griffin wanted the half million dollars he would get with her. Corwin said that he wanted her, fortune or no fortune, but some way must be found to persuade or force Griffin to refuse to marry her, thus enabling her to come into her own. He consulted lawyers, who told him that to comply with the statutes Griffin must voluntarily refuse. He could not be trapped or forced into a refusal.

There was a time limit in the will to Anne's marriage with Griffin. By the time she was twenty-one she must marry him or lose her property. When her father died she had just turned nineteen. Therefore two years remained before she was compelled to decide. It was decided between David and Anne that David should go to some unknown place. Anne had not told Griffin that he had a rival, and it was determined to still keep the matter a secret. There was no difficulty in doing this, for thus far it was known only to Anne and David.

Theodore Griffin was one of those men who combine the social and business world. His success lay in becoming intimate with rich persons and using them in a business way. He used his club, his friends, even his church, for profit. One evening at the opera, scanning the occupants of the boxes, he encountered a pair of binoculars in the hands of a handsomely dressed woman leveled upon him. The glasses were dropped at once, but Griffin wondered why the woman, who was young and well favored, had been gazing at him. Later, pointing to the woman, he asked a friend who she was and was informed that she was Senora De Barancas, the widow of a Brazilian coffee planter and worth millions.

"Would you like to know her?" asked a gentleman sitting near Griffin.

"I certainly would," was the reply.

"I am a friend of hers, and if you will give me references I will be pleased to present you. She has only just arrived in the city and is unknown."

Griffin found a friend who vouched for him and was presented to Senora Barancas. He found confirmation of his belief that he had attracted her attention, because she had admired his appearance, in the reception she gave him, which was, to say the least, cordial. She lamented being in a great city where there was so much to enjoy with no one to enjoy it with except her business manager, the man who had introduced Griffin, and Griffin told her that it would give him great pleasure to make her stay pleasant. She told him that she had but a week in the city, for she had the misfortune, though a woman, to be burdened with the management of large interests.

Griffin devoted himself to the young widow for a week, at the end of which he prevailed upon her to remain another week. One morning Anne Redfield received a note from an attorney suggesting that a compromise might be effected in the matter of the condition in her father's will requiring her to marry Griffin. Anne referred the note to her attorney, who advised her to begin negotiations by offering Griffin \$10,000 to refuse to marry her.

But before a reply to the offer was received David Corwin turned up and, taking Anne in his arms, announced that Griffin had married the evening before.

Corwin was in a position to give his fiancée a lot of information as to the bride, for he had brought her from Rio de Janeiro himself, had arranged her meeting with Griffin—indeed, had arranged a trap for that gentleman which had been worked out very successfully. Senora Barancas was a hired adventuress, and David had agreed to remunerate her handsomely out of Anne's fortune if she could by marrying Griffin insure it to its rightful owner. The senora needed considerable funds to pose as the widow of a multimillionaire coffee planter, and David had been obliged to borrow the necessary amount.

The wedding was sudden, for the senora received a telegram (sent by David) that her interests needed her presence on her plantation, and Griffin concluded to snap her up without delay.

David and Anne did not wait for the courts to pronounce her an heiress before being married. But it was some time before she received her inheritance. Then all the expenses David had incurred in bringing out Senora Barancas were paid and the bride and groom began to enjoy their fortune.

The Chester Inn

BY ETHEL H. HOLMES

John Overaker, a member of the national guard of the state of New York, was engaged to be married to Helen Withers, who lived in Chicago. John was called to the colors with the expectation of being sent to the war at an early date. Most young men who are called upon to fight for their country and have sweethearts seem to prefer to go forth as married rather than as bachelors. At any rate, John Overaker proposed a wedding to his fiancée, and his proposition was accepted by the lady.

Since Miss Withers lived a thousand miles from Mr. Overaker and he could not get a leave to be absent long enough to go to Chicago, be married and return, an agreement was made between the lovers that she should come to him instead of his going to her for the wedding. Miss Withers did not like the idea of a wedding in Mr. Overaker's home instead of her own, or in a hotel, or in the office of a justice of the peace. Just as she was about to start east she received a letter from a Mrs. Chester, an intimate friend living near New York, to whom she had written of her quandary, inviting her to be married from her house. Not having time before starting to write fully on the subject, Miss Withers scratched off a brief note to her lover asking him to meet her on a certain date at the location in which her friend lived, adding, "Come to the Chester."

It is unfortunate to be obliged to write hurried instructions for a meeting. Miss Withers' ink gave out as she "finished the word "Chester," and there was none left for the "s." When Overaker read the note he inferred that the Chester was an inn. He was too busy with his military duties to read the missive over a second time. Indeed, it was difficult for him to do all he had to do before leaving to keep the appointment.

Overaker concluded to make the journey in civilian dress, though he took with him a uniform in which to be married. After spending an hour on a train he alighted at his station. A taxi chauffeur stepped up to him, and Overaker told him

that he wished to go to "the Chester." The man knew of no such hotel; but, preferring not to confess his ignorance and having often seen a handsome residence which was known as the Chester place, he concluded to take the chances of its being the house his fare meant. The consequence was that Overaker was driven to the house where he was to meet his bride, thinking that he was going to a hotel. A maid in black and white uniform opened the door for him, and in a few minutes a lady came in to receive him.

"I would like a room, if you please," he said. "I am to meet a lady from Chicago here, Miss Withers. Has she arrived?"

Now, the lady was Miss Withers' friend, Mrs. Chester. She had expected Miss Withers a few hours before Overaker arrived, but had received a telegram from some one—doubtless traveling with Miss Withers—stating that there had been a railway accident and consequent delay. The fact that the telegram made no mention of Miss Withers having escaped injury looked ominous. It occurred to Mrs. Chester that it would be better for the present to keep the matter from Mr. Overaker. His having mistaken her house for an inn facilitated her doing so.

"The lady has not yet arrived," she said, "but I have been advised of her coming."

"I am Lieutenant John Overaker. I am to meet Miss Withers here to be married to her. Did she mention this fact?"

"She did. She is to be married in this house."

"Do you know if she expects me to make the necessary preparations for the wedding?"

"I will do that for her."

"Indeed. Have you had any previous acquaintance with her?"

"Oh, yes; Miss Withers has been here a number of times."

"Very well, I suppose there is nothing for me to do, so with your permission I will go to my room. I have been so busy lately that I have had very little sleep. I may get a nap before my fiancée's arrival. It will freshen me."

This suited Mrs. Chester exactly, since she hoped to get news of Miss Withers while her fiancé was resting. She led the way upstairs to a chamber, Overaker following. It did not look like a hotel bedroom, there being pictures on the walls and various articles that one does not find except in a private house, but Overaker was too much absorbed in his approaching nuptials, to say nothing of his military situation, to dwell upon the condition of his room, and after getting the dust off him he threw himself on the bed, closed his eyes and in a few minutes dropped asleep.

The next news Mrs. Chester received of Miss Withers was brought by the lady herself. She had not been injured in the railroad accident and was perfectly well. Mrs. Chester informed her of the arrival of her fiancé; that he had mistaken the house for an inn; that she had permitted him to remain in error that she might better save him from anxiety concerning his expected bride.

Miss Withers went to Overaker's room, knocked gently at the door and, receiving no other reply than a snore, pushed the door open sufficiently to enable her to look in at her slumbering fiancé. He seemed so dead tired and was resting so comfortably that she had not the heart to awaken him. Going down stairs to her friend, she said:

"I don't know but that we had better permit him to remain in ignorance of the fact that he is in a private house. He is very sensitive as to his treatment of others, and to know that he had spoken to my friend and hostess as a landlady would dampen his spirits for the wedding so soon to follow."

"I have been thinking of the same thing and quite agree with you," replied Mrs. Chester. "There will be no necessity to make an explanation. You can tell him about it at some future time."

At the end of two hours after Miss Withers' arrival the time appointed for the wedding arrived, and the butler was sent to Overaker's room to awaken him and announce Miss Withers' arrival. The announcement tended to arouse the lieutenant, who completed his toilet and, going down into the drawing room, em

braced the girl who was soon to be his bride. She explained the delay in her arrival, and her presence uninjured did away with the shock that might otherwise have been expected.

"I think we need some refreshment," said Overaker and, stepping to an electric button, pushed it. The butler entered, and Overaker said:

"Bring us in a bite of anything you may have in the larder and let me have a wine card."

The butler had been coached and retired with a simple "Yes, sir." The bride to be was about to inform her lover that he was making a mistake, but changed her mind, concluding to let the matter take its course. There being some delay in serving the refreshment, Overaker rang the bell again, intending to give the butler a piece of his mind for being so long. But the man brought with him a tray, on which were a dainty luncheon and a bottle of wine.

"All right," said Overaker. "Where's the wine card?"

"The landlady says that it will be in the bill," was the reply.

Lieutenant Overaker and his bride to be enjoyed a very delicious luncheon together. Overaker, it must be admitted, was more in a condition to make merry than his fiancée, who was beginning to feel somewhat concerned as to the treatment the friend who was permitting the use of her house for the bridal was receiving at the hands of her lover. This belief that Mrs. Chester was a landlady and was to receive pay for what she was giving was becoming embarrassing. Something must be done to change the status.

"Don't you think," said Miss Withers, "that since Mrs. Chester has been so kind as to make the arrangements for our wedding we should invite her to lunch with us?"

"Certainly. Bring her in."

Miss Withers went out and returned with Mrs. Chester, who played her part as landlady admirably and treated the bride and groom with the respect due them from one of her station. Overaker drew the line between his landlady and an equal, much to her amusement, while his fiancée was a trifle embarrassed at the situation.

The wedding was set for 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Overaker was to leave to rejoin his regiment at 5, while the bride was to remain for a brief visit. When the parson arrived the household entered a room that had been properly decorated and awaited the coming of the bride and groom. The latter was somewhat surprised at the richness of the decorations and voted the landlady who had prepared them a trump. But what surprised him more was to find her gowned and jeweled in a manner not befitting the landlady of the Chester inn. There was still another surprise—a necklace that only a person of wealth could afford, which Mrs. Chester gave the bride for a wedding present.

By this time Overaker began to suspect something was wrong. But he did not communicate his suspicions to his bride. Shortly before leaving the house he said to her:

"I suppose I am in for some expense in this matter."

"Not at all," was the reply. "Since we could not be married in Chicago, where all the expense would have fallen on my father, the bills here are all paid, the same as if the wedding had taken place at my home."

"But"—began the groom and paused.

"But what?"

"How about the luncheon and wine I ordered?" stammered the lieutenant.

The bride broke into a laugh, called her friend, "the landlady," and all was explained to the groom.

His remark on being enlightened was indicative of the selfishness of man.

"If this gets out in the regiment I'm gone up."

"I am delighted," said Mrs. Chester, "with the outcome of this affair. When this morning I received the telegram announcing the accident I was filled with terror lest we should have something very different from a wedding. I had no idea in permitting Lieutenant Overaker to remain in error, turning the affair into a bit of fun. He should certainly thank me for saving him from several hours' bitter anxiety."

"And he has also to thank you," replied the lieutenant, "for a luncheon and a bottle of wine."

When Lieutenant Overaker returned from the bridal trip, which lasted but a few days, they went to Mrs. Chester's house. Since Overaker could not atone for mistaking her for a landlady by a gift he declared that he would name his first girl child for her.

Her Adventurous Night

BY AGNES G. BROGAN

Miss Pauline Chester, art student and would be illustrator, stood at the curb of the busy street awaiting a homebound car. Home! She smiled derisively in the semi-darkness at the meaning of the word. Surely the big, bare room, half studio, half housekeeping apartment, was a poor substitute for a home. And it was all she now possessed.

She thought as she stood there aside, yet in the very midst of things—alone, yet crushing her way through the throng to the car, how typical it all was of her present life. Even in the brightly lighted apartment, as she passed down the corridor that led to her room, not one of those whom she met each day might speak a welcome because she had not been properly introduced.

Polly was not sure she would care to know them if she had. They were all such silly, chattering women, overdressed and indifferent; such rude, staring men—all but one. Polly thought of "him" gratefully. Something perhaps in the grave kindliness of his expression, his deferential yet unobtrusive courtesy, brought back the old days in Brookfield.

Each morning he raised his hat as simultaneously they appeared in the corridor locking their doors for the day's absence. Always Polly smiled and nodded, but the man vouchsafed no word. She was glad and she was sorry—glad that he was so very much the man she wanted him to be, sorry that one so alone as she might not have the comfort of an understanding friend.

In despair Polly had added to the cheerless furnishings of her studio the companionship of a cat. He had followed her, this big yellow cat, from some darkened area the night she had bought the fish. After his coveted meal had become a thing of the past Patsy, as she called him, still deigned to remain her friend. He had, she discovered, certain embarrassing and stubborn tendencies, one of which was to pry into the affairs of his neighbors, so that twice the nice young man across the way had been obliged to lift Patsy gently and place him outside his door.

Both times Miss Chester apologized; both times the young man bowed silently and pleasantly and withdrew. Polly found herself making little sketches of the grave faced man and the yellow cat during times of intermission at the art school.

"You poor thing," she mocked herself one day as she hastily destroyed her drawings, "filling up your head with a man and a yellow cat just because they've been a little human."

It seemed impossible to make a presentable sketch at home, the boys in the fraternity room overhead were so very noisy, while a player piano banged away below. She wondered as she sat through endless evenings just what it would be like to mingle with the gay throng outside, to be with one who could sympathize and understand.

"He" was lonely too. She was sure of that. Among them all he seemed to live apart. At those times when she had rescued Patsy from before his door she had caught a glimpse within of an open book, a half smoked cigar. So he, too, sat each night alone. His eyes, she fancied, were strangely wistful. Or was it fancy? Polly sighed impatiently.

"Always," she rebuked herself, "your thoughts go back to that man."

It was all very ridiculous, so she fell to drawing in earnest. No better subject at hand, she drew painstakingly the yellow cat lying stretched before the fire.

This accomplished, Polly studied reflectively an opposite vacant chair, then with a sudden dimpling smile she bent again over the drawing board. She was so absorbed she failed to notice the cessation of the player piano and a gradual growing silence settling over the building.

Raising at last a flushed face, she regarded with much satisfaction her work. The figure pictured in the chair opposite her own was remarkably true to life. The "man's" open book lay upon the table beside him, his half smoked cigar in his hand, Patsy comfortably stretched at his feet

"Twelve," chimed the little clock in sharp, even strokes. "Mercy!" exclaimed the girl, and jumped to her feet. There was something the matter with the lock as she attempted to fasten her door for the night, so she thrust it wide open, intending thus to close it securely. A mysterious rustling sound, as of some person or persons stealthily moving farther back among the shadows, caused Polly's heart to flutter uncomfortably.

Not long ago there had been a robbery in this very apartment. She wished that she were not alone. No light showed from beneath the opposite door, no evidence of "his" presence. In trepidation she reached for the door handle to close herself in when, apparently from nowhere, a man's figure confronted her. A rather good looking young man he appeared to be, though fantastically dressed. Polly's apprehension grew at sight of his close buttoned red sweater and the bandanna handkerchief knotted about his throat. The man snatched a yellow checked cap from his head and bowed. In spite of her fear Polly's face flushed angrily at his assurance.

"If you please," he said, "I'd like to talk with you. No" —as she ventured to withdraw into the room—"I won't keep you long, and I'll say it here."

"My first subject is art. I wish to give you a little dissertation on art"—

With rapidly beating heart Polly waited. It was impossible to follow the excited rapidity of the outrageous young man's flowing talk. Of one thing she was sure, he was insane.

Insane, and she alone on the deserted floor of an apartment building, at midnight. What should she do? To call out or startle a maniac, Polly remembered, might bring on a dangerous climax. What should she do?

Again, very cautiously, she moved toward the shelter of her room.

"Wait!" cried the young man sharply. "I have more to say to you than this, much more."

In the momentary silence that followed she feared he would hear her frightened breathing.

"I love you," burst out the young man at last. "I love you. For long days have I watched you stealthily, adoringly. All my future is built on hope of winning you. Your love can raise me to the highest paradise, your refusal sends me to the lowest depths of despair. Weigh well, then, lovely maid, your answer— lest I destroy myself in your presence; take care."

Faintly the girl leaned against the doorway. Surely she had fallen asleep over her sketching, and this was but part of a troubled dream. From down the hall came a low, confused murmur.

"I love you," cried the young man again — "I love you." His voice ended in a wail. "Say yes, or I destroy myself."

With a sudden flash of light the door opposite was thrown open; for an instant "he" stood there, perplexed, uncertain— he, the one wise, kind soul in all this dreadful city. Polly never hesitated.

"Oh, please!" she murmured, and rushed toward him. The man of the opposite room put her aside gently while he caught the wild youth by the collar. "Now," he asked sharply, "what is the meaning of all this?"

Up from the shadows of the long corridor came slowly and silently in their sneaker shoes a dozen men, young men. Polly's startled eyes discerned them to be, and for the most part they were laughing or covering their mouths to smother their laughter. Her tormentor of a moment ago was grinning, too, grinning rather sheepishly, as the one man's stern gaze was bent upon him.

"Explain," commanded her protector, "or shall I call the police?"

"Oh, Mr. Lawrence," said a voice, "let us down easy. Maybe we did overdo it a little tonight, but we got pretty gay. It's the fraternity initiation, you know. Bayes, here, was ordered to do a few stunts, had to travel around town all night in that rig and end up with a proposal to the prettiest girl in the building. We picked

Miss—er—Chester out as she came in tonight and stipulated the art talk when we'd learned her profession. He had to do it. Don't blame Bayes."

The spokesman's repentant eyes met those of the enlightened Miss Chester.

"Awfully sorry," he said remorsefully. "Any way in the world we can apologize, jointly or singly, we'll do it." His solemn face changed convulsively. "Gee," he laughed, "but it was funny."

Polly drew a long breath, and her champion, still holding the victim of initiation by his sweater collar, looked back at her.

"What do you say, Miss Chester?" he asked. "Shall we have these disturbers of the peace jailed, as we could, locked up for the common idiots they are, or"—

It was very comforting to have a protector. Also it was because of these very idiots that "he" was now her protector.

"We will let them go free," she said. Humbly abject, the initiation committee shuffled away. Amused understanding sparkled suddenly in the eyes Polly turned upon her companion. "It must have been funny for them," she said. But Mr. Lawrence was regarding her intently. There seemed to be in his gaze more concern than such short acquaintance warranted.

"You should not be living here alone," he said abruptly. "A girl like you ought to be cared for in her own home by her own people." The sparkle left Polly's eyes.

"That," she motioned to the bare studio, "is my only home"—she smiled tremulously—"and Patsy all 'my family.'" Patsy, seeing at that moment a chance for a neighborly call, darted across the hall, eluding the girl's grasp. It was the man who after a hasty chase brought him back to her fireside, and there, forgotten, face uppermost, in plain view, lay Polly's clever sketch.

For long vibrant moments they looked from the drawing back again into each other's eyes, the girl's pained, startled, his glowing with some new emotion, deep, unreadable. Then impulsively he caught up her pencil and with swift steady strokes drew opposite the chair which was his own, a slender girlish figure. Fascinated, Polly watched him, and if his pencil was not as skilled as her own the likeness to herself was too true to be mistaken.

Again he raised his glowing tender eyes to hers, then wrote beneath the sketch one word—"Home!"

And when the door of his apartment closed behind him Polly caught up the yellow cat. "Of course, Patsy," she said, "it is all a part of my unreal adventurous night. Tomorrow it will not be true."

Patsy narrowed his inscrutable golden eyes and purred contentedly, for the "Home" picture was to come true, and Polly would be lonely no more.

A Marine Chase

BY WARREN MILLER

The most interesting chase I ever had in all my experience as a detective officer was for Simpson, who had robbed the National bank of \$50,000 in currency.

Simpson was located in New York by the police, or was supposed to be, and his problem was to get out of the city with the plunder. The problem of the police was to arrest him with the funds on him.

My being called into the case arose from certain information that came from Philadelphia. The chief of police of that city gave out information that a small steamer, no bigger than a canal boat, that had been laid up for some time, had been purchased and was being put into commission. The owner could give no satisfactory account of the sale or who was the real purchaser. Indeed, they had become suspicious of the use to which she was to be put and had advised the police to be on the lookout.

The way we got on to Simpson's connection with the steamer was this: An anonymous letter was received at police headquarters which stated that he had chartered a single sticker at New London and was intending to make for Canada in her. Had we not heard of the Philadelphia matter we would have been on the lookout in the direction of New London. As it was we inferred that Simpson had written the anonymous letter to put us off the track. But if this were so he had not counted on our being in a position to put these two bits of information together.

As soon as I arrived at Philadelphia I went to the dock where the suspect was lying. Without appearing to be interested in her I made a mental note of everything in her outward makeup. She was evidently such a boat as is used for carrying passengers short distances between a city and its outlying towns. She had a single stack, was moved by a propeller and was painted white. The name on her stern was Peter Muller.

There were no signs of her leaving port, and I got the idea I was off the track. I employed a man to watch the boat and made a visit to the police department, hoping to get some more information concerning her. They told me they thought they had traced the new ownership of the Muller and it was all right. Had it not been for this information I would have watched the boat myself or at least taken better measures to keep advised of her movements. As it was I went to my hotel and to bed early, being tired. I was awakened at 3 o'clock in the morning by a bellboy, who ushered into my room the man I had placed on watch. He told me that he had gone to sleep about midnight and was awakened by a puffing. Opening his eyes, he saw the Muller going out.

I chartered a tug, and, having received information that my quarry after making the ocean had gone northward, I followed in hot haste. The Muller must have had good motive power, for despite the fact that we put on all steam she kept ahead of us. We saw nothing of her, but upon inquiry learned that she was several hours ahead of us, making northward.

Before leaving Philadelphia I had telephoned the New York police department of what had taken place, but whether or not they took steps to head off the fugitive nothing came of my notification. I kept on, guided by inquiry alone all day, but all day gaining on the Muller. When night came on I felt that temporarily at least I had lost her, for at night she could go where she pleased without her movements being noted.

However, I reasoned that the Muller would not know that she was being chased and would therefore not be likely to attempt to throw me off her track. At any rate, I determined to put into the first available port and try to pick up information of the fugitive the next day. This I did and in the morning started again northward, making inquiries along the way. About noon I got the first information. The Muller had been seen about five hours ahead of me, still pointing northward.

In this way I followed the fugitive for several days. The last I heard of her was off Cape God. She was then pointing for Portland. I now saw her object. She would make for Casco bay, in which there are several hundred islands, among which she would have an excellent opportunity to lose herself. There would be both advantage and disadvantage in this to me. I would have her cooped within a limited area, for she could not go on with safety northward, there being no harbor between Maine and the St. Lawrence river. But to find her among the islands of Casco bay would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. At the same time I might hunt her down by the same process of inquiry I had already pursued. I made Portsmouth, where I learned that the Muller had been there. A man had come ashore to buy provisions, answering to a description of Simpson. It was evident from this that he did not suppose he was followed, or he would not have taken the risk of going ashore unless disguised. This theory turned out to be wrong, as will appear later.

I looked for a week among the islands of Casco bay for the Muller without getting any trace of her whatever. Then one morning when I went up from below I saw a boat anchored in a cove that answered to her except that the latter was a lead color, while the Muller was white. It happened that we had for two days had one of those fogs that float in from the ocean in that region. This put me on to a train of thought. My father had been in the volunteer navy during the war between the states, and he had told me that ships attempting to run the blockade of the Confederate ports were painted a light gray, this being the color best adapted to concealment, especially in the gray of the morning. This, together with the resemblance in all except color between the Muller and this boat I was looking at, suggested to me that the fugitive had been repainted. During a two days' fog there had been ample opportunity to do this.

I at once ran over every point I had noted when the Muller was lying at Philadelphia, and this gray boat before me corresponded with her in every particular. I at once gave orders to steam for her. We were lying at anchor at the time, and the fires were banked. Before we could get the anchor up and sufficient steam on the gray boat got off and disappeared around a point of the island.

She had evidently been waiting for the return of a boat that had gone ashore and started without any appearance of haste as soon as it reached her. I did not believe—if she were the Muller—that she suspected we were after her. In order that she might not know that we were I avoided all appearance of haste, though I was immensely impatient. When we finally got off I purposely went around the island on the other side from the suspect. When we next saw her she was steaming along deliberately. Looking eastward I saw a low bank of fog on the horizon and feared that we would be caught in it before reaching the suspect. I ordered on full steam, but the fog bank rose rapidly and we were soon enveloped in it.

That was the last glimpse we got of the gray boat for another week, when in passing a narrow inlet in the mainland I saw her at the further end partly concealed by overhanging trees. I at once ordered our course altered, and we entered the cove. I now felt easy, for she could not get out of the inlet without our intercepting her. As we sailed on, drawing closer, I noticed that she was lying at anchor, but no one was on deck. No move was made to get away from us, and when we drew up within a cable's length of her we saw plainly that no one was aboard of her. I got into a small boat, was pulled alongside of her and got aboard. Every entrance to her cabin was locked. There was reason to believe that those who were cruising in her had gone ashore and had left her under lock and key to avoid losing what she contained.

On pulling toward her I had noticed the name on her stern. It was the Seminole of Jacksonville, Fla. My suspicions of her were lulled by this till I remembered that no such small craft from Florida would be likely to make its way up to Maine. Besides, the letters had been evidently fresh painted.

I felt such confidence in her being the vessel I was looking for that I sent to my tug for implements, broke open the doors to the companionway and went below. Everything indicated that the crew had gone ashore. There was no steam on—indeed, no fires in the furnaces. I searched her for evidence as to

what she was or to whom she belonged, but could find not a scrap of anything to give the information. I was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that she belonged to a party who were cruising for pleasure. So I fixed up the door as well as I could and got back to my tug.

The captain, after hearing what I had to say about the matter, said that he would go aboard the Seminole and have a look for himself. I concluded to go back with him. Having obtained access to the cabin, he led the way straight to the furnace and opened the door. All was dark within the firebox. The captain scratched a match and held it inside the box. Then he took out a package. I snatched it from him, unrolled it and exposed a large package of bank bills. On being counted they turned out to be the amount I was after, lacking about \$2,600, which had evidently been paid for the boat and other expenses.

I asked the captain how he had come to suspect that the money had been hidden in the firebox, and he said that when an examination had been made of the interned German liners at Hoboken at the time the break was made between the United States and Germany he had been on hand and seen pieces of the machinery of one of the vessels taken from an unused furnace.

The rest of the story remained for some time a mystery. Then one of the Simpson's crew, who at the time did not know what he was hired for, revealed the facts. Simpson got word of the fact that we were inquiring for him and during the two days' fog repainted his boat and changed her name. Being caught in the cove, he had little time for deliberation. He resolved to make the pretense that had deceived me, trusting his plunder to the firebox rather than taking it with him. There was nothing for him to do after we found the plunder but to make off without it and save himself a term in state prison.

The Owner's Unexpected Return

BY PAULINE D. EDWARDS

"The Society for Psychical Research is doing some good work lately," said Gilbert to his friend Slade as they sat beside the open fire. "I believe the time will come when it will show a scientific relation between mortality and immortality."

"I do not believe in ghosts," said John Slade emphatically.

Daniel Gilbert drew his chair nearer to the crackling blaze.

"I never believed in ghosts—until last year," he said quietly.

"What happened last year?" Slade's tone was skeptical.

"I saw a ghost."

"Where had you been dining?" laughed Slade.

"I hadn't dined at all. I came down to the Elms quite unexpectedly. I wanted to look up some papers that I knew to be in the library. The house had been closed all summer, and at this time even the caretaker was away for a few days.

"My plan was to dine at the village inn, go up to the Elms, spend the evening searching for the papers, sleep in my old room and take the first train to town after breakfast. My train was several hours late, and when we arrived in Elmville the inn was shut up for the night. If you are acquainted with our village boniface you will understand that for neither love nor money nor 'auld lang syne' would he open his doors to a guest after midnight. So it meant a dinnerless tramp up to the house.

"It was nearly 1 o'clock when I entered the avenue, and I was surprised to find the iron gates of the drive wide open. That was against my orders.

"It was a dark night. The stars shone bright, and a young moon threw a thin silver veil of light in the open spaces. As I came in sight of the house I stopped still in my tracks.

"You may not believe me, John, but my house was a blaze of light from basement to cupola, and from behind the lighted windows came the strains of an orchestra, while forms floated to and fro in swaying rhythm to the waltz melody.

"As I stood rooted to the spot the church clock in the village struck once, and as if by magic the music ceased and all motion stopped behind the thin curtains. An instant later every light in the house died out as if extinguished by some mighty breath. I ran up the steps and fitted my key in the great lock. It yielded, and the heavy door swung outward to my touch.

"I threw a ray of light about the great entrance hall and reached for the button to switch on the electric lights. The button clicked without response. Again and again I tried, but in vain.

"A search of the drawing room and library revealed the same condition. The current was shut off and probably had been since the departure of the caretaker.

"I lighted the large oil lamp on the library table. It was an easy matter to dig out the documents I wanted and store them in my leather bag. As I set the bag on the floor I saw lying on the Turkish rug a white rose, fresh and fragrant, as if just plucked.

"This was no earthly blossom, I decided, as I laid it before me on the table. And then I had another shock, for almost under my hand and in the very spot on which I had placed my bag when entering the room was a small lace handkerchief. Across one corner was embroidered in tiny letters a girl's name." Gilbert blew a cloud of smoke, that obscured his face. John Slade leaned forward in his chair.

"And the name—the girl's name?" he asked quickly.

"Viola — just Viola," said Gilbert dreamily.

"That is not all of the story," said Slade impatiently. "Go on, old man."

"No; that is not all. I turned to the mantelpiece and leaned my head against the high shelf, trying to solve the mystery of my house, for to my knowledge no woman, save the caretaker, and old black mammy, had darkened—or shall I say brightened?—my doors for several years.

"When I turned back to the table the handkerchief was gone!

"With hardly a thought as to whether I was seeking shadow or substance I thrust the rose in my pocket, and, snapping on my pocket electric, I hastened into the hall. There was a gleam of white in the distance, and I pursued it. It flicked around a corner and disappeared up a small spiral staircase that led to the second floor.

"When I reached the top of the stairs the bit of white became a woman's graceful form, with some ethereal garment of filmy stuff floating behind her. And as I followed I seemed to be walking among violets.

"Down the grand staircase she vanished, this time with little clicking heels on the polished floor. I held her steadily in my ray of light and was after her like a flash. We crossed the drawing room, and then she disappeared through the paneled door that leads into the west gallery—you know that long, glass inclosed gallery that my father used as a winter parlor? She flew down the length, and I hoped to catch her at the end, but at the door leading into the gardens she turned her face toward me for one instant, and, by Jove, John, she was the loveliest girl I ever laid eyes upon—and you know I don't care for women!

"Just a glimpse of her beauty, and the door opened and closed sharply, leaving me alone in the west gallery. I was tired out by the exciting adventure of the night and too wide awake to sleep, so I went back to the library, got my bag, put out the light and left the house. I spent the night sitting on a bench in the railroad station, and it is needless to say that I took the first train to town."

"And that is all?" asked Slade after a little silence. "Isn't it enough?"

"You didn't search the house, make any effort to discover whether the intruder was spook or human—didn't you do anything?"

"Nary thing. I went abroad the following week and at times forgot the incident. A few days ago it came back to me, and so I invited you down to spend this night with me at the Elms."

"Why this particular night?" demanded Slade suspiciously.

"Because it's the anniversary of my adventure with Viola," replied Gilbert coolly. "I want a witness to further demonstrations, you know."

John Slade sank back into the shadows of his chair and smoked thoughtfully. Once he burst into a reminiscent chuckle.

"I suspect you have lost your heart to this Viola, as you call her. Was she so lovely?"

"She was perfect," said Gilbert sincerely. "Her hair was that dusky black that frames the face mistily, you know; her eyes were almost golden and her brows fine and black like her hair; but her coloring, her features, her form—oh, I say, Slade, I can't get her face out of my mind!"

Slade lighted a fresh cigar. "I must tell you an incident of the same sort that happened to a friend of mine," he said solemnly, "and it may serve to throw light on your own affair."

"Out with it," said Gilbert briefly. "It's only 10 o'clock now. You have till midnight, John."

"This man owned a grand old place in the country, but he was a bachelor and never looked at it.

"There was a young cousin of the man's, a girl who was a beauty and a toast. Never mind her name. She has married and changed it for another. This girl was up to all sorts of mischief and pranks and carried a lot of scatterbrained young folk with her in many a harmless escapade.

"She conceived the idea of giving a ball in the old mansion of her cousin. Now, I have not the slightest doubt that the man would have gladly consented to turn the house over for such a merrymaking had they asked him. But, no; of course half the fun lay in the clandestine proceedings!

"And so one night when the moon was young and the aged caretaker off on leave, several great automobiles rolled quietly up the long avenue, and the mischievous girl and her friends and their reluctant chaperons trooped through a side entrance and made their way to the great ballroom on the second floor.

"The room had been cleaned in some mysterious manner, and when the electric chandeliers were ablaze and the polished floor stretched forth an inviting surface the small orchestra they had brought tuned up, and the fun began. Several servants unpacked refreshments in an anteroom while the young people danced and between dances wandered over the grand old house lighted from top to bottom by Laura's" —

"Laura!" shouted Gilbert, but Slade interrupted:

"Hold on there, Danny! I didn't mean to make a slip! The house was lighted up and the dancing was going on and everything was going along finely when suddenly a messenger appeared among them. The station agent from the depot, who had known of the merrymaking, came to say that the owner had arrived at the station and was on his way to the house. He had jumped on his wheel and sped with the message.

"They worked fast and without judgment One bright soul cut the electric light wires and plunged the house in total darkness. Before a search could be made for candles and escape made the front door was opened and the intruders heard footsteps below stairs. After awhile the library door opened, and all was silent.

"By aid of matches and the station master's bicycle lantern the party reached the ground floor and' by stealth left the house. That was all part of the fun, don't you know. And then, just as they were going to leave, one of the girls discovered she had lost her pet handkerchief and was sure she had left it in the library. She recovered it although she would not say how, and she was quite breathless when she climbed into the motor. And that is all."

Daniel Gilbert arose to his full height and laid his pipe on the mantel. "And that was Laura, who got up the party and everything. I shall bless your wife all her days, John, if she will introduce me to my ghost girl—Viola—Viola who?"

"Viola Blair. She happens to be visiting Laura now. I hardly think you'll find her in the west gallery tonight, Dan."

Gilbert pulled a time table from his pocket and looked at his watch. "She is quite free?" he asked abruptly.

Slade yawned and stretched his long arms luxuriously. "She was—er—until —we always thought she had met her fate just a year ago tonight. She has never been quite the same since. I can't say any more"—

"There's a train to town at 11:05. We'll take it. You and Laura owe me something, John."

"We'll pay it with compound interest. That will be Viola!" said Slade, grasping his friend's outstretched hand.

A Trap Foiled

BY SARAH BAXTER

One morning a young woman entered my law office in Boston saying that a mutual friend had recommended me for an attorney. She said that her father, who was a widower and an old man, had been ill for more than a year, under the care of a trained nurse. The nurse, Miss Dartmore, was a woman about thirty-five years old. She was attempting to marry her charge with a view to getting control of his fortune. A struggle was going on between the nurse and the daughter, the one trying to accomplish this marriage, the other endeavoring to prevent it.

My client, Miss Ambrose, was having the worst of the struggle at the time, for Miss Dartmore had taken the old man aboard his yacht, the Rowena, and had sailed away with him on the high seas, taking with her a considerable portion of his property in negotiable bonds and cash.

It occurred to me that the proper course for me was to get a warrant for Miss Dartmore's arrest on a charge of kid

napping, a deputy sheriff to serve it and give chase. I called up a friend who knew all about yachts and where one could be procured, and within a few hours I had chartered the Nautilus, an auxiliary boat, and before sunset Miss Ambrose, an aunt of hers, myself and a deputy sheriff were off in the wake of the Rowena.

All we knew of the direction taken by our adversary was that it was eastward. It occurred to me that Miss Dartmore would endeavor to lose herself among the islands lying beyond Portland, though she might stop at that city for the purpose of being married. Miss Ambrose informed me that so far as she knew her father had not thus far consented to a marriage, but he was quite feeble, and if the nurse had sufficient time she would doubtless dominate him to her purpose.

On reaching Portland we put in there, made a hurried search of the harbor and, not finding the Rowena, pushed on eastward, striking the islands as soon as we left port. They are very thick, and we passed many landings, which enabled us to make inquiries without stopping if any one had seen the yacht we were after. We soon got track of the Rowena, but she had twelve hours' start of us, and this was a great advantage to her. Nevertheless we tracked her, sometimes by inquiring of those on shore, but usually of those on the water. She kept in among those islands nearest the mainland and nearest together.

Miss Ambrose was very much troubled lest her father give way before we could catch the party, and if he did there would be no trouble in getting a clergyman to marry the couple at almost any of the villages on the shore. I did all I could to encourage her and directed the engineer to keep up full speed. From those of whom we inquired who had seen the Rowena we knew we were gaining on her.

One advantage we had of our enemy— a description of his yacht, while it was not likely she had any idea even that she was pursued. Consequently we could approach her without our intention being discovered. But Miss Ambrose had learned that the sailing master of the yacht was in league with the woman and that he had enlisted a crew on whom he could rely to resist capture.

Well, we kept hearing of the Rowena being nearer and nearer to us until at last, rounding an island, we saw her at anchor in a cove not a mile away from us. In order not to excite suspicion I put the Nautilus off a little, but slowed down in speed. After sailing about for awhile with no apparent definite purpose, constantly getting nearer the enemy, I saw that she had a sufficient number of men on board to resist us if they saw fit. If I could get near enough for the deputy to read the warrant, should they refuse to yield, they would be subject to the penalty of the law, and this would be a great advantage to us.

I told the deputy to tie his white handkerchief around his neck instead of a cravat and otherwise make himself look as much as possible like a parson. Then sailing up to within a cable's length of the Rowena I

hailed her and asked if she would take a gentleman aboard—a clergyman—waiting for an opportunity to go to Portsmouth.

There was a long delay in getting a reply. I believed that Miss Dartmore, if she had not yet been married, would welcome one who could marry her. I was not disappointed. A reply came that the clergyman would be welcome, but there was not room for any one else. I ordered out the dinghy, the supposed clergyman and I got in and were pulled to the Rowena. We had a description of Miss Dartmore and found a woman on deck whom we recognized as our quarry.

The deputy stepped on the deck and began at once to read the summons.

For a moment she flushed angrily, but, realizing that she had been tricked, looked very much crestfallen. I sang out that I was an attorney and desired to know whether she would obey or defy the law. After a brief consultation with her sailing master she decided to obey. She was taken on board the Nautilus, and the two yachts sailed back to Boston together.

Her captive was very glad to be released. He had no desire to marry any one, but was not able physically or in will power long to resist the pressure that had been brought to bear on him.

Why I Did Not Go to College

BY DONALD CHAMBERLIN

I was 16 years old and still far from being prepared for college. There was no good school near where I lived, and I concluded to hunt up a tutor. Upon inquiry I learned that there was a clergyman in charge of a little church in a neighboring village who was a classical scholar, and to him I applied.

I well remember the morning I went to the parsonage for the purpose. It stood in a goodly sized yard, and between two trees to which a hammock was swung was a girl dressed as a child, but it seemed to me that she had outgrown her habiliments. I asked her if the Rev. Mr. Snively was at home, and she said I would find him in his study.

I found a bookworm. He knew enough to prepare me for college, but either he had not the faculty of imparting his knowledge or I was a dunce, for I learned very slowly. One day I went to the parsonage for a recitation very poorly prepared, and finding the girl in the hammock she told me that my tutor, her father, had been called away on some parochial duty. I told her that I was not disappointed, for I did not know my lesson. She asked what I was studying, and when I told her it was Latin she said that perhaps she might help me.

She made room for me beside her in the hammock, and, opening my text book, Vergil, I began to construe, the girl helping me in the parts that I was unable to get over.

After that I went to my recitations in advance of the appointed hour in order to be tutored by Louise before going to her father. It was not long before she took her place in the hammock regularly in order that she might be ready to give me my coaching when I came. While I was ahead of time at the hammock, I soon came to be behind time at the study, and despite Louise's tutoring I was seldom any better prepared than before I had availed myself of her services.

My appearance at Mr. Snively's study growing later and later, he protested, saying that my tardiness interfered with his accomplishing other purposes. I excused myself by saying that my delay was occasioned by an endeavor to prepare myself for my recitation. I would hereafter either come on time or not at all. If I were not on hand five minutes after the appointed time he was not to expect me. During the week after this arrangement I was on time twice. The other days I was studying in the hammock with Louise. Unfortunately, Louise was teaching me love instead of Latin. The next week, fearing that Mr. Snively would give up trying to prepare me for college and I should thereby be deprived of his daughter's love coaching, I braced up and was on hand for five out of six lessons. But at these times I sat in the hammock with Louise after instead of before the lesson.

In this way a whole summer passed. One day when I went to take my lesson Mr. Snively, after much hemming and hawing, told me that I was no nearer to passing my entrance examinations than when I had come to him. The autumn was coming on, and it was already too cold to sit in the hammock with Louise. I told Mr. Snively that I preferred not to go to college till I was 18 anyway, and this would give me another year. During the winter I would go to the best school I could find, and in the spring I would again put myself under his tuition. He did not think much of this plan, but he did not know that I was studying love instead of Latin, and the hammock would not be again available till the next spring.

As for studying with Louise during the winter, there would be no excuse for that, and since she was regarded by her parents as a child she would not be allowed to receive visits from one of the opposite sex.

But Louise was passing through a period when girls develop very rapidly. During the winter we managed to meet occasionally, and when the spring opened I resumed my study of Latin with her father and my study of love with her. I found the latter as easy as the former was difficult.

However, I got on better with the Latin the second summer, for I found a literal

translation of the Aeneid of Vergil which I was studying, and I astonished my reverend preceptor with the elegance of my translations. He said that I was very weak in giving the construction, but quite strong in turning the Latin text into English.

When the second summer of my preparation for college came around Louise and I had both passed the gate of manhood and womanhood, and we began to think of nest building. I found that I had no use for college, but I wanted a home in which to place myself and my mate. We talked the matter over, and both agreed that I would be better fitted for business than a profession, and if I were going into business I was at the proper age to begin. Dr. Snively agreed with me when I told him that I would make a better business man than scholar and commended my decision.

All men regret not having received a college education. But one can't have everything, and while some of those who would have been my classmates are struggling lawyers, doctors or engineers, others are impecunious bachelors without homes. I am prosperous and, having married early, am surrounded with sons and daughters not very far from me in age.

Mr. Willmarth

BY PAULINE D. EDWARDS

As a girl I had not many cronies. I did not care for this girl and that girl each for a brief season, but preferred one very intimate friend, such a friend as I might tell all my joys or sorrows to and who would respond in kind. To others I was reserved. I would not think of making a confidante of any but the closest intimate friend. Possibly this may have resulted in my having such a friend who superseded all others in the matter of intimacy.

Alice Wetherell and I were first schoolmates, then college chums. After our graduation we were separated for a year, then we were brought together again. I found on our reunion that Alice was engaged. She received me with the same old affection, but the idea at once took possession of me that although I was her girl chum I had been reduced from a first to a second place in her heart.

I was not long in communicating this idea to Alice. Instead of denying its correctness, she seemed thoughtful, but indisposed to talk about it. When I asked her if either her lover or I must be lost to her which would she relinquish, she admitted that she would give me up for him.

"You shall meet him, Gwen," she said to me, "and when you have become acquainted with him I am sure you will admit that were you and I to change places you would give me up instead of him in case you must lose one or the other."

"Why, Alice, how could I do that without being in love with him?"

"Never mind that," was her reply, and this was all I could get her to say.

Alice not only introduced me to her fiance, Robert Willmarth, but left me alone with him a great deal. The first time I met him it did not seem to me that there would ever be anything in common between him and me. He was a serious man, while I preferred one of lighter vein. My beau ideal of a companion was a man of mirth.

The second time I saw Mr. Willmarth he appeared very different to me. His gravity had given place to levity, but a levity behind which seemed to lurk something, the exact nature of which he did not care to reveal. At our first meeting Alice was present most of the time. At our second, he called upon me without her. While in the first instance I dreaded to have Alice leave me alone with him, lest I would not know how to entertain him; in the second we were in complete rapport.

I asked him what had occasioned the change in him. He laughingly declared that the presence of his fiance while he was with any other woman threw him on his beam ends, as he expressed it. If any one else had said this I would have taken warning, but he said it jocosely, and not as if he were endeavoring to establish a relation with me in opposition to Alice.

Nevertheless, I noticed that whenever Alice was present at our meeting he was the same reserved man he had been when

I first met him, and we were as far distant from each other as ever. Certainly Alice had been mistaken in saying that if I knew him and had to choose between her and him, I would choose him.

Alice told me one day that she was obliged to go away for awhile and charged me to "take care," as she expressed it, of her fiance. "I rely upon you," she added, "to see to it that no designing girl gets him away from me."

Now, I did not like this a bit, for, as I have said, Mr. Willmarth when free from her presence was very attractive to me, and I did not consider myself a very safe person for her to leave him with. Not that I believed myself capable of taking him away from her, but I did not relish the temptation. However, I promised her that I would do my best for her interest, and with that she left me, apparently perfectly satisfied.

When Alice returned I dreaded to meet her. Mr. Willmarth had not scrupled to make love to me, and I had not the strength to break away from him. While my conscience stung me, his did not seem to trouble him at all. There was ever present with him that devil-may-care bearing, a disposition to consider the matter as something amusing, which he had shown from the first. On the evening before Alice's return I was with him and, noticing his freedom from consciousness of guilt, an idea occurred to me.

"I believe," I said to him, "that this is a conspiracy between you and Alice to prove what she once said to me—that 'if I were called upon to choose between you and her I would choose you.'"

He burst into a laugh, and I was sure I had guessed right, though he denied my hypothesis in toto.

"I will admit," he said, "that a game has been played. Alice will be with us tomorrow, and she will explain."

The next evening Mr. Willmarth called and was followed by Alice and—there were two Willmarths, twin brothers, Bob and Alec. Alice's fiance was Bob.

"Gwen," said Alice, "if you had to love me or Mr. Willmarth, which would you give up?" "Both," I replied, "for perpetrating on me such a deception."

We had a double wedding.

His Sweetheart

BY WARREN MILLER

While serving with my regiment as surgeon at Manila I received a letter from my old friend Dick Thurston at Batavia, Java, asking me if it would be possible for me to come down and see him. He was ill, and despite the fact that he was taking the best of care of himself he didn't get any better. Couldn't I obtain a leave even for a short time?

I confess I did not relish the idea of making the journey, but Dick and I had been cronies and I would no more think of refusing him than my own brother.

I succeeded in getting a leave, and I found Dick Thurston on a coffee plantation, where he had gone some months before in the interest of an American grocery concern. He was living with a Javanese family, consisting of a mother, a daughter some twenty-five years old and several children. The young woman was attending to the patient's wants. Indeed, she had the whole care of him.

Dick was suffering from malignant dysentery. I put him under treatment, but got no response. A couple of days after I began he was as bad as ever. What puzzled me was that his trouble was intermittent. At one time he would appear so well that I couldn't believe there was anything the matter with him.

I hadn't been attending him long before I discovered that the Javanese girl who nursed him was in love with him. This set me to thinking. I had seen an extract somewhere—stating that if a Javanese woman takes a fancy to a European she will either have him or poison him if she gets the chance. Without saying anything to Dick I resolved to watch her. She was very regular in bringing in his meals, and on several occasions when she did so I concealed myself in a closet, keeping my eye to a nail hole. But if she was poisoning his food she didn't do it when she gave it to him.

"Dick," I said, "your nurse loves you."

"You don't mean it!" he exclaimed.

"Have you been making love to her?"

"I never thought of such a thing."

"Have you any objections to doing so?"

Dick demurred[^] but as I told him I had a theory connected with his illness he finally consented. The next time she was with him he called her to him, took her hand in his and told her that her kindness was winning his heart. She did not object and went away looking very happy. The next day Dick was better. I told him to keep up his lovemaking for a few days, and he did so, with the result that his improvement was remarkable. But to get the food that I was sure was poisoned I was obliged to have him do this very thing. He turned away from her, but did not eat the next meal she brought him. I smuggled in some food for him, ate a little of that the girl brought him and made away with the rest surreptitiously. The test fulfilled the conditions. The whole length of my alimentary canal became irritated. This was the same symptom as Thurston's. I didn't care to repeat the experiment.

There was now nothing to do but get the patient from out the clutches of this too much loving nurse, but my curiosity was aroused as to what poison she was using.

I had, among other instruments I had brought with me, a pocket microscope. I took up this microscope and brought it to bear on some of the food I had eaten, and immediately the cause of the trouble was revealed to me. The substance was filled with fine hairs—not animal, but vegetable—hollow tubes spiked like bayonets.

I took some of the food to a Javanese from whom Dick had been buying coffee, showed him the hairs with the microscope and asked him what they were.

"Those," he said, "are bamboo poison hairs, so call from the fact that they are used by our people who wish to put some one out of the way."

After a consultation Dick and I decided that we didn't care to have anything to do with Javanese justice, so I advised him to keep on good terms with his "sweetheart" for a few days that he might get no more spikes in his stomach and get well. Nevertheless, before he ate any of the food she gave him I examined it with my glass.

Then one fine morning we walked away, leaving the maiden glaring at Dick from the door where he had said goodbye to her.

The Envelope of Fate

BY AGNES G. BROGAN

Miss Charlotte Blake took one glance at the long yellow envelope thrice returned, then violently tossed it across the room. "Charlie" Blake she had been called at college, and the masculine name had clung, seeming to express better the girl's daring, adventurous spirit.

Now that college was a thing of the past, an occasional classmate, meeting Miss Blake upon the street, would continue to greet her as "Charlie." So she had signed the familiar name to that fatal manuscript. "Selfish animals," Charlie dubbed absent scenario readers in general; "they won't even take time to read the thing through." Rescuing the discarded envelope, she hastily drew forth its contents. "Just as I thought," she murmured disgustedly—"the marker has not been disturbed."

It was a good story; Charlie was sure of that. She had but to close her eyes to be thrilled in fancy by the last great scene of her play; she could picture the beautiful face of her favorite movie actress raised appealingly to that of the villain. But how could one impress a stubborn scenario reader who refused to look at one's work?

"If I could make him read it," she thought desperately, and then Charlie jumped to her feet. "I'll do it," she laughed back at her own reflected face as she pinned on her hat. "I will take the play to the man myself."

Her sudden elation vanished as she waited in an anteroom for permission to be ushered into the busy man's presence. Also with that enthusiasm went some of her bright confidence. But one purpose still remained—Charlie would do her best to make the man read the thing through. Perhaps he would allow her to read it. She alone knew how to express the proper lights and shadings.

"You next," announced a grinning office boy, and Miss Blake passed inside.

The frowning scenario reader, seated before a typing machine, swung around forbiddingly.

"Good afternoon," he said and waited.

Charlie came forward. "I am going to ask a few moments of your time," she began pleasantly, "to present a photoplay of my own."

The man glanced suggestively at a small clock. "If you will just leave it," he said, but his tone was less curt.

"Three times," she complained, "you have sent it back unread. I know because of a secret marker. Suddenly her own infectious smile dimpled Charlie's face. "Now," she asked, "how can I trust you?", For the first time the absent eyes of the scenario reader seemed to see the girl before him. Visibly his frown faded in face of her contagious good humor. Almost apologetically he motioned toward a pile of unopened envelopes.

"All those to go through every day!" he exclaimed. "Sometimes we can't quite make it."

On the top of the pile Charlie placed her own offering. "But you will at least read mine," she insisted.

"Please promise!"

The man's face lost its tired look, and an unexpected smile answered hers. He arose as she turned to leave.

"I promise," he said. Nor did the writer return immediately to his waiting task. With an unusual impulse he walked to a window commanding a view of the street. Again he smiled amusedly as the girl's graceful figure could be seen emerging from the entrance of the building.

"Three times," muttered the man and began a fumbling search through the first pile of envelopes on his desk. "Better keep that promise now if ever."

And to Charlie, waiting in a fever of hopeful impatience, the promise seemed long delayed. At last, however, the postman came slowly up the steps, and she rushed to answer his ring.

For a full moment the rose color left the girl's eager face. A long yellow envelope was placed in her hand. And he had appeared so intelligent, that scenario reader, so kind. In the story's return lay not all the man's perfidy, for it had again been sent back unread. The secret marker told the tale.

Two very real and big tears overflowed the dark eyes and splashed upon her hands. Charlie viewed them contemptuously. "I had so counted upon that reading," she murmured. Then she sighed resignedly and reached for her hat. "A promise is a promise," she told herself decidedly, "and if a man can't be trusted to keep one he must be made to do it."

If Charlie had been swinging along the campus instead of down a proper city street she would have whistled cheerily in her undaunted courage. Now she smiled as she hurried along at thought of this persistent "bearding of the scenario reader in his den." How would he greet her? For at the back of Charlie's brain was a strange assurance of not having been forgotten. When he had read her wonderful story he would justify in his own mind her persistence.

The whistles blowing out the noon hour reminded her apprehensively that the editor might leave at this time for luncheon. A wait in his office would be discouraging. Charlie crushed on through the snow. Deep it lay all around her, great drifts, which the sweeper had not yet been able to remove. Then all at once in her headlong rush Charlie collided with a masculine figure. She had one startled glimpse of the man's hand reaching frantically for his dislodged eyeglasses and another glimpse of those same glasses disappearing with a mysterious finality into adrift of wayward snow.

Blinking dazedly, her victim turned upon her. "I—I beg your pardon," he stammered. "Could you locate my glasses, which have just fallen? I am as blind as a bat without them."

Charlie blinked, too, for the victim turned out most surprisingly to be that difficult and stubborn reader of plays. It was evident in his present predicament that the man had not recognized her.

"I will be grateful," he went on more easily, "if you can find them for me."

Charlie looked over the road, with its rushing autos and crowded traffic, which the man evidently intended to cross. Then she made her sudden resolve.

"I could get them for you," she answered slowly.

"I distinctly saw where they fell. The glasses went directly to the bottom of the drift without leaving a sign above."

"Will you?" asked the man. He waited perplexedly. "Or perhaps," he continued as she made no response, "one of the men about might shovel through the drift"

Miss Blake shook her head. "They would be sure to break the glasses," she said.

"I couldn't risk that," grumbled the man. "I'm in a dev—excuse me—very great hurry. Most important work must be done before I could have time to look up new glasses, reading work!" he exclaimed conclusively.

"I know," Charlie replied. "You are a judge of photoplays. I called about one of mine which you had returned three times. You gave your promise to read it"—she paused impressively—"and again sent it back unread."

The man peered closely into her face. "I thought I recalled your voice," he said. "You are"—

"Miss Blake," answered the girl.

He shook his head despairingly. "If I could only see you But I remember the circumstance now. Your manuscript was not to be found when I searched among the papers. It was regrettable."

Hastily Charlie drew the offending yellow envelope from her muff. "It's here now," she suggested.

"And I can't see," complained the man.

"If you could?" she asked him.

"I'd read it first thing I got back to the office," he told her. Then, standing there between the great drifts of snow, they looked at each other and laughed.

Instantly Charlie was down upon her knees, one cloaked arm thrust to the shoulder into the icy depths. A moment more and she held up to him, gleaming, intact, the valued glasses. Through them presently hte own twinkling eyes answered the challenge of hers.

"The manuscript, please," he requested crisply. A moment longer he waited to glance at the title page and her neatly typed signature. "Charlie Blake?" he questioned.

"It was the name the girls gave me at school," she explained. "I used it in preference to Charlotte." Understanding flashed across the man's face. "So that was why I could not locate the manuscript," he said. "I was looking for a more ladylike nom de plume. Not knowing it to be yours, it was sent back unread. Will you forgive me"— suddenly he held out his hand—"and accept my grateful thanks for your service?"

"It was I who knocked your glasses off," Charlie reminded him.

"You saved my life," the man insisted. "Why, I've a scenario to get out before 2."

It was she now who stood watching his departure. Had his own heroes upon the screen, she wondered, as fine and straight a figure, as true and frank a face? Charlie was glad as she walked thoughtfully homeward that he had not broken his promise after all. And a reminiscent smile lingered upon the man's face as the elevator bore him upward.

"You're late," said Billy, the office boy. The scenario writer still smiled.

"Yes," he replied; "I met with a— holdup."

A few days later his letter came to her. "The play might be acceptable," he announced noacommittally, "with the making of a few changes." Would she come down some morning at 10 to go over the manuscript with him? Together they might agree upon what should be done.

Charlie was disposed to resent the changing in any way of her wonderful work. She had hoped he would be agreeably surprised at the originality of her idea; but, though a man so very difficult to please, the thought of hearing his deep laughing voice was far from unpleasant.

Charlie's eyes brightened in anticipation as Billy admitted her to "the" presence. Business was laid away so completely for the hour which followed that she was sure hers must be a most important piece of work. Even he commended the great idea—if worked out a little differently—and, leaving the office earlier than usual that morning, the scenario editor walked with the girl to her door. Many conferences were necessary for the completion of the plan, though when Charlie was alone she realized vaguely that she really knew little about it all or just what the needed changes would be.

Patiently she awaited the play's presentation, though that great triumph now seemed lost in the new found joy of the present. Truly the yellow envelope itself had been an instrument of fate in leading her to the man's presence, even the eyeglasses tossed into the snow had played their part in fate's golden chain. Perhaps her ability as a writer had first gained his interest—Charlie could not tell—but she was henceforth determined to show him to what heights she could aspire. "Playwriting would be her career, and he" —

Between hope and despair the man worked over other imaginary love affairs, while Charlie's willful, haunting face laughed at him from the pages, so completely she dominated him. And after the play had been produced would he dare to ask the one question which trembled constantly upon his lips when she was near? For the play was so palpably not her own, enlarged, built upon in every way to be made "possible," Charlie's poor little idea had been lost in the process. This play was her world, or so he thought. Would she ever forgive him? And at last came the eventful night of its production.

Seated by the side of the man who was responsible for her triumph, Charlie watched the unfamiliar scenes in breathless interest and found it no triumph at all. This was not her play, these people portraying their parts not the cherished people of her imagination.

In silent trepidation her companion regarded her disappointed face. When they left the little theater Charlie spoke.

"I suppose," she said quietly, "that you consider my work a failure, but I shall write and devote myself to writing until I prove your opinion wrong."

In passionate entreaty the words long withheld fell from the man's lips. "Oh, I love you—love you," he said. "Care for me a little, give yourself to me, let me work, let me write for us both."

Resolutely the girl turned aside. "I must succeed in my career," she answered coldly.

During the days which followed Billy watched his employer anxiously. "The boss is dopy," he remarked. For long moments the scenario editor would sit with unseeing eyes fixed upon space, his temper becoming annoyingly uncertain. Then one never to be forgotten sunshiny morning a long absent visitor stepped from the elevator.

"Is he in?" she asked the boy.

"Sure, Miss Blake," answered Billy.

Unannounced Charlie entered the office. Half unbelieving, the man arose from his chair.

"I have come"—she began.

"To take back what you said," the man interrupted. "Tell me, Charlie, dearest, that you will give up your writing, your success, for my sake."

"No," answered the girl, "not quite that, I think." She laughed softly. "But as it seems you only can make my writing successful, why, don't you see I must have you."

Billy, looking into the room, very discreetly closed the door. "Better not go in," he advised a would be visitor. "Boss is busy directing one of them 'sure thing' love scenes."

Over the Wire

BY WARREN MILLER

There is no more favorable opportunity for young people of opposite sex to poke fun at each other than over a telephone or telegraph wire. There is a fascination in operating from behind a shield, rendering one invisible. A girl will delight to say things to a man who can't see her and doesn't know who she is. I was a telegraph operator when a young man, and I noticed this disposition in many a girl operator with whom I talked over the wire. I am a matter-of-fact sort of a fellow myself and doubt if it would ever have occurred to me to bamboozle a girl in this fashion had not the girl shown a disposition to bamboozle me. She who first tried it was an operator at a station about 20 miles away from me. I was in the town of M., while the girl was out at G., a way station some 20 miles distant in the country. She had more time on her hands than I, and I suppose

that is what set her on to quizzing me. She started in one night about 9 o'clock after taking a message from me, beginning by asking me what was going on in town; how I liked M.; if there was any fun going on there and expressing her dislike at being compelled to live in a little way station like G. From this we fell to talking about ourselves, and naturally, as persons of opposite sex at that age invariably do, finally drifted on to love and marriage. From love and marriage in general we dropped into specialties, at last narrowing the topic down to ourselves.

The girl led me along in the channel she laid out herself till I admitted that, marriage being a lottery, I would about as lief marry a girl I had no knowledge of as one I had met and loved. All I required was to know that the girl I was to marry possessed a fair amount of good looks. One thing led to another till it was arranged that she should mail me her photograph and I should send her mine. Then if we were mutually pleased we might proceed further toward forming an acquaintance with a view to matrimony. The next day I looked over my stock of photographs—not of myself, but of my friends—and, selecting one of Sam Atkins, the best looking fellow in the lot, I sent it to the girl. Sam was off at the Spanish-American war at the time, and I trusted to his getting shot or dying of disease so that I might not get into trouble by passing him off for myself. In return I received a picture of a rather pretty girl, 'who I judged from her features was full of mischief, the very one to get up just such a complication as we were entering upon. Upon her lips was an engaging smile and in her eyes a very saucy look.

After that the wires began to warm up with our conversations, till at last they come to a white heat with love passages. When we had fired a lot of such missiles at each other we began to talk about meeting. At my proposal to go to see her she cooled down a bit, and it was easy to see that her exuberance was the result of fighting behind a masked battery. I made several propositions to go to see her on a certain day and hour, but for every time I set she gave some reason why it would be inconvenient or impossible for her to receive me. At last it occurred to me to go up and look her over without an appointment. Never having seen me, she wouldn't know me.

So one day, having secured a leave, I started to see my charmer. On arrival I walked up into the village and on the street met my girl, whom I recognized at once by her photograph. I followed her into several shops and finally to a yellow house that stood back from the street. She went into the house, and, having waited half an hour for her to come out, I concluded she lived there.

I knew a man in the place, Tom Foster, and, hunting him up, told him that there was a girl in the town I wished to know. He said there was going to be a dance that evening and all the girls in the place would be there. He would take me with him, and if he knew the girl I wished to meet he would introduce me. I thought that an excellent plan since it would give me the advantage of keeping my affairs to myself. I could obtain an introduction to different girls without my introducer knowing the one I was especially interested in.

That evening I went with Foster to the hall where the dance was to take place. He asked about the girl I wished to know and why I wished to know her and all that, but I evaded his questions. I didn't propose to let the girl herself know that I was the fellow she had been making love to over the wire—at least till I had learned all about her.

She was there sure enough, looking as pretty as a picture—a brunette with a profusion of jet black hair, a stately figure and as mischievous an eye as ever I saw in a woman. When I first saw her she was talking with another girl about her own age, and that I might not give myself away to Foster I asked him to introduce me to the other girl.

She proved to be Miss Ellen Ormsby, a staid young woman whom I found rather hard to talk to. I asked her who was the girl she was with when I was introduced to her, and she said she was Agnes Miller and, taking the hint, offered to introduce me. I accepted and was introduced.

I don't think I ever chuckled so in my life as when I found myself incognito chatting with the girl whom I had been saying soft things to over the wire. I made up my mind to stave off the denouement as long as possible. Not for the world would I give her any clue to my identity by the slightest reference to what had passed between us. And as to letting her know even that I was a telegraph operator, nothing would tempt me to risk giving away the whole thing by doing so.

I danced several times with Agnes Miller and once with her friend Ellen Ormsby. I concluded to go slow with Miss Miller, but I got in a number of compliments and several looks indicating my admiration for her. When I left her to catch my train, which I did before the dance had ended, I pressed her hand and received a slight pressure in return.

Very soon after this I received a shock at the return of Sam Atkins. The Spanish war was over, and Sam had come home in excellent health and handsome as ever. What disconcerted me was that in some way—I having sent my girl his photograph—he might spoil my fun. But on second thought it occurred to me that there was no likelihood of this since she was so far from both of us.

He did give a scare one evening when he came to my room and seeing a new and pretty face among the photographs on my table began to quiz me. He declared he would scour the country round till he discovered the original of the picture.

On my return from G. I resumed my telegraphic chat with her, enjoying it far more than before from having made her acquaintance. It was very amusing to talk with her, having seen her, while I was still unknown to her except through Sam Atkins' photograph. She continued to complain of the dullness of G., so I concluded to ask her to come to town and go with me to the theater. This would let her into the secret of my having sent her another man's photograph, but I must let that out some time, and there was no especial reason for delay.

She accepted the invitation with alacrity and appointed a night. I procured a couple of seats and wrote her that I would meet her at the station and take her from there to the theater; she would know me by a bit of orange ribbon worn in my buttonhole. To keep up the fraud till her arrival I asked her to carry a few violets in her left hand.

When Miss Miller alighted from the train and saw me, whom she had met before, with the orange ribbon in my buttonhole she stood still for a moment; then, simply remarking that we had met before and I had deceived her about the photograph, we left the station, and, since it was a summer evening and an hour must elapse before the play would begin, we walked to a park or central square and sat down on one of the benches. She then reproved me mildly for sending her the wrong photograph, but said she didn't mind that since she had made my acquaintance at G.

When we entered the theater and took our seats but few people had arrived. We enjoyed ourselves chatting about our telegraphic correspondence and watching the audience come in. Suddenly my heart stood still.

Who should enter and take the two seats in the next row in front of us but Sam Atkins and Miss Miller's friend, whom I had met at G., Ellen Ormsby.

The expression on their faces was, to say the least, peculiar. Smiles were struggling to assert themselves which the three were endeavoring to suppress. I cast a hasty glance at my companion and saw her eyes fairly dance with a mingled delight, mischief and triumph.

I knew at once that the game I had been playing had not only been discovered, but had been turned against me.

"Sam you rascal!" I exclaimed. "You're a traitor to your own sex!"

My remark occasioned a burst of laughter from the whole party except myself.

"Come," I said, "explain the matter."

At this moment the orchestra struck up the overture, and in ten minutes more the curtain rose. My tormentors forced me to wait till the end of the first act before giving me an explanation; then my companion said:

"Nellie Ormsby is a telegraph operator at the G. station and has been your correspondent. She sent you my photograph with my consent instead of her own and, having no more confidence in you in such a matter than herself, did not believe the likeness you sent her was your own. She went to M., taking the photograph with her, and a mutual friend of hers and Mr. Atkins there told her that it was his picture. Before leaving town she saw you at work at your instrument and knew that you were her correspondent. Then Mr. Atkins returned from the war. She went again to M., made his acquaintance and told him the secret.

"Meanwhile you had gone to G., and the moment you entered the ballroom Nellie recognized you. She saw your attention fixed on me and introduced you. Your enjoyment in the part you were playing gave us double what was evident in you. When your invitation came we decided to spring the joke on you here at the theater. We wrote Mr. Atkins to find out if possible where our seats were and get two more near them. This he learned through you.

"So you see that when a man sets himself up to outwit a girl he must sharpen his own wits on a whetstone."

It was all plain enough now. I acknowledged myself beaten and after the play invited the party to the best supper that could be obtained.

There is a sequel to this story, but not to be given here. The gist of it is that I paired off with Miss Miller and Sam with Miss Ormsby.

Making History

BY ALAN HINSDALE

I was driving my auto along a country road, enjoying the constantly changing scenery. The spring had developed into summer; the leaves on the trees were full blown, birds were singing in the trees, a range of distant hills stood soft and mellow against the horizon, light, fleecy clouds sailed lazily over an azure sky.

I am one of those who love to ride slowly, that I may see each vista, each landscape, near objects, enjoying them while I look. I have no patience with those who must be always tearing along so rapidly that no sooner does one get an eye on a green velvet slope with cattle feeding upon it than, presto! it has vanished and its place is taken by a ragged height covered with scrub trees, past_ which the road may be so uneven as to require a three-mile-an-hour gait. Such drivers will get over twenty miles of beautiful scenery in a jiffy, to drag and jolt along beside a quarry or a street lined with hovels.

On this summer morning of which I speak my heart had been warmed by the beautiful flecked sunlight beside the road, and I felt especially charitable toward all the world. I was motoring along a narrow dirt road, but extremely smooth, lined with a broad space of turf on either side to the fences, when I saw before me a feminine figure whose lines and dress indicated that she was a young girl. She was carrying a satchel of ample dimensions on her arm and used a staff. When I came up with her I brought my machine almost to a standstill, she turned her face toward me, and I noticed that it was comely.

"Shall I give you a lift?" I asked.

"Thank you, sir. I have far to go and am weary," she replied with that Scotch accent which in a woman is especially musical, though from a man the words usually come like bullets from the muzzle of a pistol. She was about to climb into the rear seat when I opened the forward door, and she took the seat beside me.

"Where do you go?" I asked.

"I dinna know at present," she answered. "I am to meet my brother at Medbury. Where we shall go from there I canna tell."

I got out my road map, ask the girl to unfold it and while I held the wheel with one hand held the map with the other. I saw that Medbury was a matter of ten miles as the crow flies, but it was fifteen by road and nearly thirty by such roads as would be suitable to an auto.

"At what hour do you expect to meet your brother?" I asked.

"This afternoon."

It was 9 o'clock in the morning. I was not required to be at any particular place at any particular time. There was plenty of time to get the girl to her destination

before she was due there. She was pretty, her voice was very sweet, and I saw no reason why I should not enjoy her companionship for the greater part of the day instead of riding alone.

I jogged along till we came to a fork in the road, and as I was about to turn into the right road the girl made a move to alight, saying that her route lay over the left road, which was only a lane. I told her that I would take her to her destination over motorable roads, and she consented. Again I examined my road map and laid out a course involving a fifty-mile ride, and since I preferred a slow gait we would make Medbury at noontime. As we rolled along I led my companion to talk about herself, for I felt some curiosity concerning her. She was not dressed as a farmer's daughter, and, although her accent was Scotch, it was not a peasant accent. I could not understand why so refined a person should be trudging along on foot, and I did not consider the lonely roads a proper place for a young girl to be unattended. During our conversation she gave me her name as Edith MacDowriell. Her father and mother had come to America from Scotland when she was about ten years old, which accounted for her retaining only a portion of the dialect of her native country. Her father had been a landed proprietor to a very limited

extent in Scotland and, having been seized with the desire to extend his possessions, had sold his property and come to America, where the proceeds of the sale would purchase a more extended domain. But it did not appear from what the girl told me that he had utilized his American acres except in devoting some of them in the cultivation of fruit.

As we do not realize that we are making history, so we do not recognize in small events that we are shaping our lives. I often revert to that pleasant summer day when I took into my auto for a lift a girl I had never seen before, intending at the start to set her down where our paths diverged; how I resolved to make her my companion for a ride; how she communicated to me a brief statement as to her social position. It was under the warm sunshine, tempered by a delicious cool breeze, while we rolled along through a beautiful country that I was making history for myself as well as the girl beside me.

In remembering the several small incidents that were tending to divert my life's path from what it had thus far been I have often thought that the matter of good roads played an important part. Had the roads been stony or filled with hollows my attention would have been necessarily fixed on them and my temper would have been sorely tried. Instead the roads were perfect. For miles the dirt roads were dry and hard packed. When we entered upon the turnpikes they were either covered with the finest stone or were of asphalt. My machine worked to perfection. On these accounts I was not only able to give my whole attention to my fair companion, but my heart was free to warm to her.

The history that I was making for myself and my companion was in a way more important to her than to myself. But why this was so I did not learn for a long while afterward. During that eventful day I set her down as a most demure Scotch lassie in whom there was no disposition to act for herself. Indeed, she impressed me as barely having escaped from the nursery.

At noontime we came upon a grove in which stood a cottage, with a sign, Wildwood Inn. There were rude tables in the grove, and I inferred that a luncheon would be obtainable, so I turned my machine into the place. A woman with a white cap and apron came out, and I asked her to produce the best she had in her larder.

That luncheon tastes delicious whenever I think of it to the present day. There was an omelet fit for the gods, biscuits such as were never made before north of Mason and Dixon's line, so light that I almost feared they would fly up among the branches of the trees above us before I could get them to my mouth. As for the butter, I doubt if it had been churned an hour. A heartier course was spring chicken served with cucumbers, so that the heat of one was nullified by the coolness of the other, while both heat and coolness were enjoyable. A cup of tea

smoothed by the richest cream was what we drank; for desert a great dish of strawberries as large as walnuts. And all the while I was looking into a pair of brown eyes opposite me and listening to a musical voice.

One thing more of a different kind was needed for our history making. It was not important except in a small way; there was nothing heroic, scenic, lurid, romantic about it. Indeed, it was very commonplace. A punctured tire. Nothing more, nothing less. Who would suppose that so unromantic a happening should have been the capstone of incidents shaping the lives of two human beings? Nevertheless it was. Never before had I driven without an extra tire. I would not have been without one this time had there not been a delay in filling an order. I had expected one to be delivered to me that morning. It had not arrived, and I was obliged to set out without it. Thank heaven that it was not forthcoming!

I had barely started from the Wildwood Inn when one of my forward wheels was let down on the road. Fortunately we were so near the inn that my companion could go back there to wait while I tried to extricate myself from the dilemma. A short distance down the road was a house, where I found a telephone, but I spent a long while before I could get a man to come from a garage with implements to repair the break. And it would not be safe to use the tire for an hour or two after he had done so. It was 3 o'clock before the patch was put on and half past 4 before I dared start again. Then I drove back to the inn and informed Miss MacDownell that we were twenty miles from Medbury, and since I dare not

strain the newly patched tire we should have to proceed slowly over such portions of the road that were inferior. It might be 6 o'clock before we reached the place.

"How long will it take to go home?" she asked.

"I can get you back to where I overtook you in an hour," I said.

"Take me home. I dinna care to go to Medbury noo."

"Will you be too late to find your brother?"

"I dinna care to go there noo," was all I could get out of her.

We were fortunate in reaching her home without further mishap. When we came near the house my companion left me and went on alone. Before parting I arranged for a call and another ride. The call I made at an early date, and after that we had many rides together.

One matter turned up a mystery. It soon came out that Edith had no brother. Upon my accusing her of having deceived me she confessed that on the morning I took her into my auto she was going to meet a lover for an elopement

It was then that I understood her words, "I dinna care to go there noo." And this is why I have said that I was making history more for her than for myself. She changed her intended husband during our ride.

It turned out well for her that I invited her to ride and that the bursting of the tire delayed our reaching Medbury as it did. Had she arrived there at the time appointed she would not have found the man she had expected to meet, for he had no intention of keeping the appointment. Some years after our marriage I learned through friends of my wife that the man with whom she had expected to elope had at that time already more wives than the law allowed. He had been born a gentleman, but was the black sheep of the family. The reason why she wouldn't have found him at the appointed place was that with No. 2 had got wind of his intention and had had him jailed. I never allowed my wife to know how serious a fate she escaped.

How the Scale Was Turned

BY F. A. MITCHEL

I

Stephan Mikhailof left the дума, where he had been working hard for days to bring about a change in the government which had endured without break for many centuries. Calling a drosky, he entered it telling the coachman to drive him to his home, and throwing himself back on the cushion behind him, closed his eyes and remained in a position denoting exhaustion till the vehicle drew up before his house on a broad avenue lining the Neva. Descending from the drosky, he paid the driver his fare and entered his home.

He was met in the hall by his daughter Marya, a girl not long turned seventeen. Marya was a typical Russian. Her eyes were a pale blue, her complexion soft white with a faint tinge of rose, her hair so light that had it not been for her youthful face it might have almost been mistaken for the whiteness of age. "Oh, father," she said, "I am so glad that you have come. Sergius Ivanovitch is in Petrograd, his regiment having arrived last night. He has been to see me and begs me to intercede with you to gain your consent to our betrothal."

"Why do you trouble me about this matter," replied the father angrily, "at such a time? Do you not know that we are on the eve of a consummation of efforts that have been working for half a century to throw off the despotism which sucks the lifeblood of our people? Besides, it is impossible that you, the descendant of a long line of nobles, should unite with a commoner."

"But, papa, are you not working for the cause of the people?"

"Yes, but that is no reason why I should take one of the people into my family."

"Sergius is an officer, the youngest captain in his regiment."

"He was a common soldier in the ranks."

"And was promoted on account of his having more influence over his comrades than all the other officers of the regiment together."

"Enough. I have neither time nor inclination to argue with you on this point while engaged in the great work of pulling down the tottering bureaucracy. You know that the czar, aware of our efforts to free Russia, dissolved the representative assembly which we wrung from him in the last revolution. You know that we refused to be dissolved. This from the government's point of view is revolution, treason. Had the czar the power his predecessors had every member of the дума would either be sent to Siberia or executed. Even as it is, remember that your father is in jeopardy. If we succeed we will free our country; if we fail we will be proscribed. Our chains will be so riveted that the sledge of a Titan cannot break them."

"But surely you will win."

"Not if the czar continues to pour troops into the capital. All autocratic governments are supported by bayonets. The officers are usually chosen from the aristocratic classes, and the officers control the men. When the war began the bureaucracy controlled the appointment of officers and took care to appoint those upon whom they could rely to support the throne. Many of these officers have gone down in the struggle with the central powers, and their places have been filled by men from the people."

"It is to be supposed that the czar has concentrated such regiments in Petrograd as are officered by a superfluity of men upon whom he can rely. We are secretly arranging for a coup d'etat. Tomorrow morning the people will turn out in the streets and demand food. Their clamor will increase till the troops are called upon to quell the disturbance. That will be the critical moment. The revolution will commence, and its success depends upon whether the troops can be relied upon to shoot down the revolutionists. Now, my child, I must get some rest. I have not slept for two nights. Do not mention again

the name of Captain Ivanovitch. I will never consent to a union between you and any man who is not your equal in social rank."

The father was about to turn away when the daughter stopped him.

"But, papa," she said anxiously, "is not this a too dangerous move in which you are engaged? What course will our generals at the front take? Will they not protect the czarina and her children with their lives?"

"The czarina!" cried Mikhailof angrily. "It is this German woman who has brought about this grave crisis. She has been furnishing our enemies with information of our movements and our necessities. Through her influence trains laden with our stores have been sent from west to east instead of from east to west. In league with the detestable Rasputin she has baffled the efforts of those very generals at the front who you are thinking may protect her.

"It is they who have called upon us here to bring about this revolution. They have arranged that the czar shall be arrested and forced to abdicate for himself and for his son. The members of the imperial family are to be held prisoners in the palace. The best men in Russia are watching and waiting to form a new government."

While Mikhailof had been talking Marya had been listening intently, at the same time thinking of her lover, who on the morrow would take part in this great movement, anxious both for him and her father. Stephan Mikhailof staggered upstairs to his room and without removing his clothes threw himself on the bed and was asleep the moment he touched it.

A few minutes later there was a summons at the street door, and Captain Ivanovitch entered the house. Marya joined him immediately.

"Have you seen your father?" the captain asked anxiously.

"Yes," replied Marya in a voice that trembled. "He has refused his consent."

Marya ran over what her father had told her as to that which was expected to occur the next day. When she had finished she asked her lover whether, when the revolution occurred, the troops would fire on the people.

"That is a matter of uncertainty. The men are in sympathy with the crowds they will be ordered to shoot down. Some of the officers are revolutionists, and some are loyal to the czar. This is the case in my regiment, and I believe it is true of the others unless it may be some of the more aristocratic commanders, where the officers all support the bureaucracy. Success or failure depends upon whether the people or the bureaucracy can win over the troops on their side."

II

The next morning there was a feeling in Petrograd that momentous events were to be enacted. For a long while speculators had tied up food or the railroads had been overburdened transporting munitions of war, or the bureaucracy, which must receive its sop from the sale of everything the people needed, had been working its game. At any rate, while Russia was surfeiting in provisions there was a dearth of eatables in Petrograd. Crowds began to collect in the streets, and such places as were intended for the sale of food were surrounded. It seemed that every one living in the capital was interested in what was going on. Then regiments of soldiers were marched through the thoroughfares to positions to which they had been assigned. As they passed the crowds they were cheered, and they answered the salutes good naturedly. But their commanders remained rigid.

The troops of the — th regiment, of which Sergius Ivanovitch was a captain, were ordered to attack a number of laborers who had revolted. Their colonel, having drawn them up in line, gave the order to aim and was about to follow it with the word "Fire!" when Captain Ivanovitch stepped out before the soldiers and said:

"Soldiers, if you fire on these men, who are simply demanding bread that is denied them by the bureaucracy, you shall first kill me."

There were sounds of the dropping of the butts of rifles along the line, first a few, then an increase, followed by hundreds together. Then the workmen advanced and shook hands with the soldiers, and the crisis had passed

The events of that memorable day followed in rapid succession, and the next day it was announced that the long line of Russian rulers, including so many despots—Ivan the Terrible, Catherine, whose immoral character had so stained the imperial ermine—had for the first time been broken, if not ended.

Stephan Mikhailof, who went to sleep at his home the night before the revolution, did not awaken till the next afternoon. He was aroused by shouts and cheers without. Going to a window, he saw a large concourse of people standing in the street looking up at his house. Raising the sash, he bent forward and, looking down, saw that the center of the crowd's attraction was an officer in uniform standing on the landing of the

steps leading up to the front door. While the crowd waved hats and handkerchiefs the officer was bowing his acknowledgments.

Mikhailof, having been clothed, was sufficiently presentable to go downstairs to learn what all this meant. He was met by his daughter.

"Who is the officer without?" he asked

"Sergius Ivanovitch."

"And why is the crowd cheering him?"

"Because, papa, while you have been asleep there has been a revolution. The turning point came when Sergius' regiment was ordered to fire on some workmen. It was at an aim, ready, to mow down the rebels, when Sergius stood between the regiment and the workmen and told the soldiers that if they fired on men who were simply demanding bread denied them by the bureaucracy they must first kill him. That turned the scale. The workmen and the soldiers fraternized, and from that moment regiment after regiment took the part of the people."

Marya's last words were drowned by a prolonged cheer without. Captain Ivanovitch turned and entered the house. The crowd dispersed.

Ivanovitch, seeing Mikhailof, paused.

"He came to see me, papa," said Marya, "and the crowd followed him here."

"It appears," said Mikhailof to the captain, "that while I have been sleeping the revolution has taken place and you have performed no small part of it."

"He stepped in at the crisis," said Marya, "and brought the soldiers to espouse the cause of the people."

"You mean I turned my regiment to the cause of the people," said Sergius modestly.

Mikhailof advanced to Ivanovitch and, putting both arms about him, kissed him, according to the Russian custom, first on one cheek, then on the other.

A Clever Ruse

BY WARREN MILLER

The first time I saw Daisy she was coming over her father's broad acres on a horse whose lope was very like a rocking chair. She was riding astraddle with divided skirts. No other woman on the ranches thereabout would ride in any other costume. Barker was riding beside her, and the two made a very handsome pair. The brim of his sombrero was flattened against his forehead by the wind, a lariat hung at his saddlebow, and his splendid figure was revealed by his costume—viz., flannel shirt and trousers, with boots to his knee.

Daisy had gone out from the east with her father, who became a sheep raiser, and she had become fascinated with ranch life. Unfortunately she had conceived a romantic idea of the genus cowboy, and, Barker being physically a perfect type, she had persuaded herself, or, rather, he had persuaded her, that he was just the man for her. I say "unfortunately" because he was not an educated man and in every way beneath her. There were other features about him to render him undesirable which will appear presently.

The couple passed me, all of us saluting, though they were unknown to me, and I rode on to the ranch house, where I had business with John Nolan with reference to a large purchase of wool. While dickering with him on his veranda, up the roadway came the couple I had met and alighted at the foot of the steps. Throwing their bridle reins over a post, they walked up on to the veranda. Then I learned that Daisy was Nolan's daughter.

As the pair passed into the house I noticed a cloud flit «over the face of the girl's father. I knew by Barker's bearing toward her that he was in love with her, and I judged that his attentions were not relished by Nolan. But he said nothing to me then, and we went on with our dickering. When I arose to go he said:

"There's no place about here in which you will be comfortable except my house. Send for your traps."

I accepted the invitation, especially as I was pleased at being under the same roof with Miss Daisy. I knew she had a lover, but my attraction for her did not then go so far as to intend to come between them. I merely liked the idea of being near her during my stay.

But I stayed a good while, and it was not very long before she and I each made a discovery. I discovered that I wanted

her, and she discovered that she didn't want Barker. Meanwhile I found out something else—that he had become frightfully jealous of me and if I took her away from him he would probably kill me. At first he and I spoke to each other when we met either on the ranch or elsewhere. Then he only noticed me at the Nolan house.

I thought it best after awhile to remove to the (so called) hotel, a mile from Nolan's. If anything happened between Barker and myself I preferred that it should not happen under Nolan's roof. So one day I removed my luggage to my new quarters.

One morning I was sitting on the porch of the hotel smoking a brierwood pipe. Barker came out of the barroom, where he had been drinking, and took a seat about thirty feet from me. I didn't know he was there till, turning my head, I saw him out of the corner of my eye sighting his revolver at me.

Naturally I started.

"Hold on there," said Barker. "Your pipe makes a fine target. We don't allow people to smoke such expensive pipes out here."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when I felt a faint tick on the bowl of the pipe, heard the crack of a gun and knew that a bullet had passed through the pipe.

"Hold up!" he growled as I was about to rise. "Your pipe don't draw with a hole in it, but it's still a mighty good target."

I snatched a look at him. He was evidently under the influence of liquor. I felt sure that if I didn't let him shoot at my pipe he would shoot at me and nerved myself to stand another shot. Indeed, this was all I could do, for I was unarmed. But a cold chill ran down my back and a cold sweat stood out all over me. Nevertheless I put up a pretty good front. I sat with comparative composure, occasionally letting a faint cloud of tobacco smoke escape from between my lips, but not daring to move a hair's breadth for fear of interfering with the man's aim.

Several persons from inside the hotel, having heard a shot, came out to discover who had been killed. They arrived just in time to see the second shot and the top of the bowl of my pipe cut off. They at once took in the situation, and, seeing me coolly puffing, not knowing my internal condition, they cried out, "Good pluck, stranger!" "Steady nerve!" "He ain't no tenderfoot!" and such like compliments.

Presently a third shot shattered what was left of the bowl of my pipe, and only the stem remained in my mouth. Whether my nerve made Barker half ashamed of himself or that he was headed off by the admiration of the others I don't know, but he desisted from further shooting. I fancy, however, he was satisfied with what he had doubtless intended for a warning that if I took Daisy Nolan away from him I would have to face sure death. The witnesses urged me to go in and have something, but I declined, saying that I was anxious for a smoke and would go upstairs for another pipe. The truth is I wanted a chance to go where I could, unobserved, give way to my feelings for a few moments, they having been controlled only by a most desperate effort.

When I was alone I staggered to the bed, fell on it and for a few minutes trembled like a leaf. But when I began to recover I started to get mad at the same time. Men will fight more desperately for a woman than for any other cause, and it occurred to me that, Daisy being the bone of contention, if she preferred me either Barker or I must die. I spent some time considering what to do, then went to the ranch, intending to offer myself to Daisy. If she refused me I would leave the field at once to all suitors. If she accepted me I would have it out with Barker.

I found Miss Daisy very much excited. She had heard of Barker's shooting escapade, and had turned bitterly against him. I told her that I wanted her and if she wanted me I was willing to settle the matter between Barker and myself. Her reply was all I could have asked for, but she positively forbade my coming into collision with my rival. I told her frankly that I believed he would kill me if I married her and that the matter had better be settled before the wedding. Being a woman, she wished to get round the mat-

ter by subterfuge and for the time being would consent to nothing definite.

Daisy was very fond of an old rancher called Jake Huchins. To her he was "Uncle Jake." A day or two after Barker's shooting, as I was riding over the country on horseback, Huchins came up behind me and ambled alongside of me.

"I hearn about the shoo tin' o' your pipe outen your mouth," he said. "Little Daisy was tellin' me about it."

"Oh, it was Miss Nolan who told you, was it?"

"Yes. And what's more, she asked me to suggest some way o' settlin' the matter without blood spillin'."

"That's impossible," said I.

"So I thort at fust, but arter awhile I thort of a plan. Barker's mighty proud o' his shootin', and he's pretty much made up his mind that he's lost Daisy. I reckon he'd agree to settle the matter by a trial o' skill between him and you."

"I'm no shot. Such a contest would give Miss Daisy to him, and she doesn't want him."

"Not so fast. You don't need to be much o' a shot. Could you hit a hen's egg at 20 feet?"

"I might hit one, perhaps, in two or three shots."

"Well, I give Daisy my plan, and she's decided to try it. Here's a note for you, and hear's a note for Barker. Whichever hits a hen's egg with a 42 the most outen five shots she'll marry."

He handed me a note to that effect from Daisy and showed me another he was commissioned to deliver to Barker.

"Do you consent?" he added, drawing rein.

"Yes," I said. "I consent to anything Daisy desires."

Without waiting for more he turned about and rode back in the direction whence he came.

The next day Uncle Jake informed me that Barker had gladly agreed to the terms.

On the appointed day I made my appearance at the barn, wondering what was to be the upshot of this singular contest. I found an egg suspended over a basket by a fine thread. I won the toss and with it the right to fire five consecutive shots at the eggs. I missed the first and the fourth, but smashed the eggs on the second, third and fifth. For my life I could not see why I had not lost. It would be nothing for Barker to hit the eggs every time.

A new egg was attached to the thread for him to shoot at, and, whipping out his revolver, he fired with apparent carelessness. He was surprised to see the egg oscillate violently, but the shell was not broken. The next time he fired he took careful aim, but with no better success. He was thunderstruck. Since I had hit the egg three times he could now only tie me.

Barker aimed long and carefully at the center and sent the egg bobbing, but still the shell was unbroken. Flinging his revolver on the barn floor, he strode away.

I knew that Barker had been tricked, but could not conceive how. It appeared to me that nothing could be more fair than the trial. I asked Uncle Jake how he had managed to let me, a poor shot, beat the best shot in the territory. He would not tell me how it was done.

Barker was never seen there again. Daisy had induced him to sign a promise that if I beat him he would leave the field clear for me.

I married Daisy and took her east with me. She said she had had enough of the wild west and had no further use for cowboys, not considering them the romantic creatures she had thought them when she first went to the country. She learned the secret of the shooting match from Uncle Jake the day we were married and told it to me on our wedding journey. The meat had been taken from the egg Barker shot at, and the featherweight shell had been moved aside each time by the wind of the ball. To hit it was impossible.

Uncle Jake had learned the trick from a prestidigitator who had passed through the locality with a traveling circus.

An Appalling Moment

BY ELINOR MARSH

Peter Nichialief was a soldier in the Russian army, fighting with the troops near Riga, which is in the northwestern part of the empire. Peter was wounded, having lost an eye in battle, and was discharged from the service. So as soon as he was able to travel he prepared to return to his home in the province of Vologda, not far from the Siberian line. He went by rail to Petrograd and there wrote his wife to meet him midway between the capital and his home with a sleigh for the rest of his journey.

Now, Peter had been married two years before and soon after his marriage had marched away to the war. The parting with his young wife was very hard on both him and her. The chances were that he would either be killed in battle or die of disease or be so mutilated as to be a burden to himself if not to others. But now he was on his way home, having lost only one of his eyes, while the other enabled him to keep in touch with the world.

Peter would not have been allowed to keep his rifle had the fact been known. Indeed, he should not have taken it away with him, but he was so attached to it that he could not bear to part with it. He had named it for his wife and carved "Sonia" on the stock. So he carried it with him on his journey home, also a dozen rounds of ammunition.

Peter reached a little town about ten hours' journey from his home in the morning, and his wife was to join him there in the afternoon. Every minute that he waited for her seemed an hour. Just before sunset he heard the tinkling of bells up the road, and a moment later a sleigh appeared driven by Sonia. She pulled up before the inn where Peter was stopping. He jumped into the sleigh and embraced her. Then Sonia turned to a basket in the rear part of the sleigh and lifted a fur robe and a blanket, exposing the rosy face of a boy a little over a year old.

"Our son?" asked Peter, his face lighting with pleasure.

"Yes; he is our little Peter. I have named him for his father."

The child's eyes opened, and seeing a man's smiling face bending over him he smiled back.

The next morning the sleigh was brought up to the inn, Peter and his family got in and started for home. The wife sat on the back seat with her boy in her arms, while Peter took the reins. The sun shone bright on the snow, but the air was cool and crisp. As Peter drove along his heart was full of gratitude that he had returned to his wife with no greater loss than he had sustained, and there was a great joy in the finding of the little stranger whose coming Sonia had kept from him for a surprise.

The reunited family jogged along, the child lulled to sleep in his mother's arms by the soft tinkle of the sleigh-bells. The country was sparsely settled, and for a large part of the distance the way led through dense forests. But Peter and his wife were used to that, having always lived in the region.

About 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when they were half a dozen versts from home, suddenly they heard a distant bark. Peter turned and looked his wife in the face, from which the color had receded. Both knew the sound too well as that of a wolf, and they knew the danger.

"If I had only left the child at home!" moaned Sonia.

They at once made preparations for an attack from a pack of wolves. Little Peter was put in the basket and covered with robes. Sonia changed places with her husband, she taking the reins, while he took up his rifle from the bottom of the sleigh and inserted a cartridge in the breach. Then he waited in the back seat for a contest which he felt would very likely come.

The barking continued and drew nearer. Judging from the volume, there must be quite a large pack. Presently a wolf was seen emerging from the wood beside the road. Sonia urged on the horse, and the wolf, left behind, followed at a gallop. Peter lifted his rifle to his shoulder.

When the ex-soldier had last aimed that gun it was at a line of Germans crossing a field. Although a well armed human enemy was advancing upon him and his comrades, he did not feel the fear that oppressed him now. Then he was a part of an army defending Russia; now he was alone and the lives of his dear wife and child were dependent upon him, and him alone. As to his own life he had become used to risking that.

Nevertheless he kept his nerve. He remembered that he had only a dozen cartridges and might have to repel a hundred wolves. He had fought the Germans when all his ammunition had been exhausted and knew the helplessness of one so situated. If he ground his teeth then, what would be his feelings should his dozen shots be exhausted now before he could drive off the wolves or reach home?

Peter was by no means ignorant of defensive warfare against wolves. He reserved his fire, while the brute followed in his wake, and when it approached too closely Sonia whipped up the horse and gained a little on it. Meanwhile wolves were pouring from the woods into the road behind the sleigh. They were yelping and snarling and tumbling over one another, but always keeping their fierce eyes on the object containing what would appease their hunger, for it was near the end of a long winter, and they were famished.

Finally the pack, now united, pressed so closely upon the sleigh that Peter felt it necessary to kill the leader, knowing that there would be a scramble for his dead body, which would occasion some delay. Peter was a good shot and put a bullet between the eyes of the foremost wolf. The beast dropped dead, and, as Peter had expected, many of the brutes pounced upon the body and fought for it. But there were so many in the pack that a number that could not get near the carcass followed on.

A wolf emerged from the wood in advance and made a spring for the horse, which was going at a gallop. Sonia had brought a revolver with her. Its chambers being loaded, she took the reins in her left hand and, drawing the weapon with her right, fired, and the wolf, releasing its clutch on the horse, rolled down into the road. His carcass took off a number of the wolves following.

The yelping and the shots awakened little Peter, who threw off the covering from his face and, realizing that something was wrong, added his own tiny voice to the din. But neither his father nor his mother could spare any time to attend to him, for the former was now forced by the pressing wolves to fire more rapidly, while the latter was emptying the chambers of her revolver upon those that were appearing in the road in front of the sleigh.

Though Peter husbanded his shots as best he could, all were gone at last. Some of the wolves had been killed by him, some had lagged behind, and some had dropped out of the chase altogether. There were now only half a dozen wolves in pursuit, but they were the largest, the strongest and the fiercest of the pack.

The leader made a spring for Peter, who brained it with the barrel of his rifle. But in doing so the weapon slipped out of Peter's hand and fell in the road.

While the body of the wolf he had killed was being devoured Peter turned to his wife, put his arms about her and kissed her.

"Goodbye, sweetheart," he said. "What are you going to do?" "The wolves must have another victim."

"Oh, Peter!"

"It is for you and the child. When the next one springs at me he will take me, but there will be food enough for all of them in my body, and you may escape."

"No; we will die together."

"I will go first. If they require more food it will be your turn next. God grant that I may save you both."

He bent down and kissed his little son; then, standing on the rear seat, was about to jump down into the road when a shot was heard and the foremost wolf fell dead. The rest scattered under shots fired from an unseen enemy.

"Pull up!" cried Peter to his wife.

Sonia drew rein and at the same time several men emerged from the wood on one side of the road.

"We are just in time," said one of them.

But Peter did not hear him; he was locked in an embrace with his wife, while the horse stood panting.

Then the mother took little Peter in her arms, while tears of relief flowed fast.

A party of woodsmen working near the road had heard the yelping and the shots

and, surmising the cause, had ran toward the approaching din. Having guns and ammunition, the driving off of the remaining wolves was an easy matter.

There was thankfulness in the hearts of Peter and his wife while completing their journey, and as soon as they had reached their home and put little Peter in his crib they fell on their knees side by side and with their arms about each other.

Peter Nichialief's farm was besieged by his neighbors to hear about the war waged so far from them that they got no news of it except when some discharged soldier came home, usually broken down in body and sometimes in mind, to tell them about it. Peter's accounts were listened to in rapt attention, but on telling of his adventures he always wound up by saying that under the most murderous fire he had never encountered anything so appalling as when the only remaining defense for his wife and boy was his own body thrown as meat to the wolves.

Not long after Peter's return another discharged soldier brought the news that the Little Father had abdicated the throne, and a new era had opened for the Russian Empire.

By this time Peter, having become strong again, was seized with a desire to go back to the firing line.

That is the singular feature of a soldier's life. While incurring danger many a man pines for safety and the comforts of home, but let him remain inactive for a short period and an irresistible desire comes upon him to get back into those very dangers that had been so intolerable.

Peter would have gone back at once had not Sonia begged him not to leave her, not to tear himself away from their little boy.

Peter listened to her appeals till the import of the stirring events came over him. In the deposition of the czar, the entering of the United States into the contest, he saw a struggle between imperialism and democracy. He believed in the rule of the people, and as one of the people he deemed it his duty to go on fighting for their cause. Then he went back.

Making an Acquaintance

BY F. A. MITCHEL

Miss Atherton had gone to the country for the summer. She was a devoted automobilist and had intended to drive herself to the summer home of the Athertons, but the machine broke down the day before she was to start, and so busy were the mechanics that no one was available to make repairs. Miss Atherton therefore reluctantly decided to take a train, and the auto went to the shop to wait till some one could find time to repair it.

From the moment Miss Atherton reached her country home she missed her auto. She busied herself in her flower garden and returned temporarily to the bicycle which she had ridden as a little girl, but none of her devices for killing time sufficed.

A week passed and the auto did not come. To one used to motoring the perambulators provided by nature seem very inefficient. Miss Atherton fretted at having to walk or to remain at home on a bright afternoon when she would like to be spinning along over smooth roads in her car.

One morning she started for a walk. The weather was balmy and rather suggestive of a siesta than trudging along a country road. Miss Atherton's motions were languorous. Presently she passed a spick and span machine standing beside the road. At the end of a long walk was a house. Doubtless the car belonged to some one in the house. The lady stopped and surveyed the machine covetously. It was a car for two persons. The nickel plate of the wheel, the starting and illuminating devices glistened in the sun. Miss Atherton was tempted to open the door and rest herself on the cushions. Glancing at the house, no one was in sight. No one was coming up or down the road. There was a click and Miss Atherton was in the car. Another click denoted that she had closed the door.

Everything about her was quite. Only birds sang.

She touched the electric starter. There was a bur-r-r of wheels. Before she realized what she was doing she had completed turning on the power, and the machine moved. How lovely! How easy! How comfortable! How restful after walking! She would run up the road for a short distance, turn and bring the car back to the place where she had found it.

As she moved off Jack Coolidge, the owner of the captured machine, came out of the house and from the porch saw some one running away with his machine. Instead of following on his legs, he ran around to a garage, got out another machine and gave chase.

Quite likely stealing is often at first unintentional. The thief admires something, perhaps covets it. He takes it in his hand. Surprised by some one who enters without seeing his act, he pockets the object, intending to replace it when he can do so unnoticed.

Miss Atherton was about to turn with the auto when she heard the sputter of a motor engine behind her. What possessed her to act as she did was a mystery to her. Hearing the words "Stop thief!" it occurred to her that if she obeyed the order she would be taken to a police station, tried for larceny and sent to state prison. Her first impulse was to put on speed; her second was to put on more speed, and the third was to use all the power of which the machine was capable.

Then followed a mad race. Coolidge got near enough to see that a woman was at the wheel, but he could not see what she was like. But presently, when she turned a short distance ahead of him, he got a better view and was astonished to see one who wore the apparel of a lady. The mystery deepened.

Women don't steal auto cars. Such thefts are usually made by men, and very rough men at that. He could not conceive of a lady stealing his C.i.r. She was speeding along at such breakneck speed that he began to fear she would come to grief. What to do, he could not decide. He followed on as he had begun.

An auto coming from the opposite direction met the fleeing girl, and the driver saw by the expression and the speed at which she was traveling that she was under some great excitement. She flashed by him, and when in a few moments her pursuer did the same it was evident that a mad race was on between a woman and a man. Was it a real chase or material for a moving picture show? The observer did not know, but having an old fashioned machine he decided not to interfere and passed on, wondering. Other machines were met, and the drivers of most of them, seeing two cars coming like the wind, drew up beside the road to give them a safe passage.

Coolidge was driving a machine not capable of making the speed of the one being run away with, but for a time he gained on it, since he dare use his power to a greater extent. The fugitive for a time maintained some degree of caution, but as her pursuer gained on her she took risks without being fully conscious of their magnitude. Coolidge, having her before him, could see every turn she made and the risks she took, fearing that he was goading her to take them, he slackened speed himself, hoping she would do the same.

Unfortunately for this purpose, the lady had no eyes in the back of her head and could not see whether her pursuer was gaining on her or losing ground. However, her ears told her that the machine behind her was making less noise, and had she not lost her head completely she would have reduced her speed accordingly. Since she showed no sign of doing so, Coolidge pressed his accelerator and and soon drew up within hailing distance. He thought of calling, but, remembering the result of his first effort, refrained.

Presently he saw the thief turn a sharp bend in the road, The auto skidded, followed a tortuous course for some distance and brought up against a deserted shanty. Before it struck the chauffeur had succeeded in reducing its speed, and neither she nor the machine was much injured, though both were badly jarred. But Miss Atherton was more rattled at being overhauled than by the jarring.

"Take me to jail!" she cried. "Take me to jail. I'm a thief."

Now there was everything in Miss Atherton's appearance to belie her confession. Coolidge saw at once that what appeared on the surface was not the truth.

"Are you hurt?" he asked solicitously. His tone was reassuring. Miss Atherton looked up and saw a gentleman regarding her not only kindly, but admiringly.

Miss Atherton, though she had regained her equanimity and satisfied herself that she was in no danger of being dragged to jail, was still not herself. Nevertheless, she was still a woman. She began to throw the blame on Mr. Coolidge.

"What were you trying to run me down for?" she asked in no friendly tone.

"I could not see that a lady was driving my machine, so I naturally supposed someone was trying to get away with it."

Miss Atherton looked as if she were about to burst into tears.

"You were quite welcome to use my machine, I assure you," faltered Coolidge, fearing a collapse.

"Then why didn't you say so?"

"How could I say so when I was not on hand?"

"But you cried out, 'Stop thief!'"

"I supposed someone was stealing my machine. I did not know that a young lady had merely borrowed it."

Miss Atherton was recovering herself slowly. She made no rejoinder to Mr. Coolidge's last remark. He concluded to make an effort to get her either to her home or his, anywherebutwhereshe was. There were two vehicles to be taken care of, but now that she had ceased to be buoyed up by excitement he did not have to trust her to drive either of them. Besides, he did not know whether the one she had been driving would be available after the collision. Opening the door of the car in which he had made the pursuit, he begged her to enter.

"Where are you going to take me?" she asked.

"To your home."

"What will you do with the one I have injured?"

"Leave it where it is for the present" She walked lamblke to the door he was holding open and entered the car. He entered at the wheel side and, turning into the road, drove back over the course they had been racing. But thte return speed was very different from the outgoing. Mr. Coolidge was quite delighted with the adventure. He was pleased that his car had not been stolen and still more pleased to have a pretty girl beside him who had given him an opportunity to show his gallantry by borrowing his car without leave.

She begged him to permit her to send a man to take his machine to a shop and repair it, but he declared that it had not been damaged. Then began an explanation as to how she had come to run away with his car, but it was not exactly the one already given with this story. Up to the point where Coolidge had cried "Stop thief!" it was a succession of excuses. From that point onward it was a lamentation that he had made her think that she was flying from a long imprisonment. Coolidge declared that hanging would be to good for him, but he did not suggest anything else that he could have done under the circumstances. By the time he got her home he had implored her forgiveness, but what for did not matter. There was a sort of reconciliation between them, and everybody knows that making up between a young man and a young woman is liable to stir the emotions. At any rate, when they parted Coolidge had received permission to call in the evening to learn if the shock Miss Atherton had received had been fraught with serious consequences.

Coolidge availed himself of the privilege accorded him, and Miss Atherton had scarcely finished her dinner before he was announced. He seemed very anxious lest some sign of physical or mental shock had appeared during the interval since he had last seen her and gave vent to an expression of joy when she assured him that she had suffered no injury whatever, except that she should have placed herself in such an embarrassing position. Coolidge assured her that he understood perfectly the innocence of the motive that actuated her in temporarily borrowing his car and assumed all the blame for causing her to take to flight. These self accusations and his efforts to render them negatory took up the evening until near midnight, when the gentleman bade the young lady good night and went home.

A few days later Miss Atherton's car arrived, and she did penance for appropriating Mr. Coolidge's machine by inviting him to drive with her.

During the summer the couple took many auto rides together, with the usual consequences. The nuptial festivities were celebrated in the autumn.

How She Proposed

BY F. A. MITCHEL

"Wimmen are a queer lot," said the old fisherman. "They remind me most of a crab. If you expect a woman to move for'ard she goes back; if you expect her to go back she goes for'ard. And if you don't know which way she's goin' she moves sideways.

"Anyway, the only gal I was ever stuck on went that sort of a gait as long as I knew her as a gal. She was the daughter of a man who owned one of the best farms ten miles back of the coast and with a lot o' money in bank. Phoebe was the only child of her parents, and it was ginerally suspicioned that when the old man died she'd git it all.

"I was a husky young' feller in those days and was in my element when in my boat. She was a single sticker with a jib, and I reckon I knew how to sail her.

"I was fishin' in those days, but in midsummer we was shut off from takin' lobsters, and the mackerel are hard to get. Now and then I got a chance to take out sailin' parties. When Phoebe came down she always had money her dad had given her for spendin', and she used to invite sailin' parties to go out with her. My boat seemed to be her favorite, though my reputation for sailin' in a fog or at night might have had somethin' to do with it. At any rate, Phoebe always took my boat when she could get it.

"She was mighty fond o' the water, Phoebe was, and when she had nothin' else to do would come down to the dock and just loaf around. One mornin' she came down when I was startin' out to place my nets.

"'If you'd like to go with me to the fishin' grounds,' I said, 'you're welcome. I'm comin' back after placin' the nets, and I'll bring you right here.'

"She looked doubtful, but mighty sudden she jumps down on to the deck. I loosed the painter and pushed off. There was a good breeze, and we sailed along in the sunlight.

"Maybe I wasn't a happy younker! Talk about work, it wa'n't work at all, although it was makin' a livin'. Phoebe was gay and pert as a little red squirrel. I took her out to the fishin' grounds to the lee of Black Island and brought her back in time for noon dinner, and she seemed to have enjoyed herself better'n when we had sailin' parties aboard.

"After that Phoebe used to go out with me a good deal. The bay was always full o' boats, and she often hailed friends o' hers. Sometimes they tried to persuade her to leave me and go with them, but she wouldn't. She told me she liked it better to have the whole run of the boat than sittin' bolt upright in a crowd ranged around the gunwale.

"When we went out in the mornin' the bay was usually quiet, but if we came back in the afternoon there was apt to be a stiff wind that kicked a sea which made a small boat uncomfortable. One morning Phoebe came down to the dock with a lunch box and asked if I was goin' to the fishin' grounds. I knew by the box that she calculated to make a day of it, so I said I was goin' and wouldn't come back till afternoon. That suited her. She got aboard, and we sailed away.

"That afternoon the wind come on to blow fiercer than I had ever known it except in a regular storm. In order to make a straight course for home we had to take the wind and sea on the for'ard quarter, which wasn't comfortable, seein' that the boat soon was half full o' water and we was both wet as drowned rats. But this wasn't the wurst of it. It blowed harder and harder, and after awhile I almost wondered if so small a boat would live in such a gale.

"Phoebe sat down, backed by the cabin, watchin' me. There's somep'n for a woman to look at in a husky man fightin' wind and waves, and I could see admiration in Phoebe's face. She didn't seem a bit afraid, so long as I was at the tiller.

"When I luffed up to the pier and saw Phoebe jump up on to it I felt a big relief. She stood up there, smilin' at me, and she says:

"That's a sail as is a sail. Not one of your little pleasure excursions for wimmin and children."

"Just so," says I, hopin' I'd never git caught ag'in in such a blow with a gal aboard, especially that gal.

"By this time I was despirit in love with Phoebe, and I was miserable, for it warn't to be expected that I would ever speak the word to a rich farmer'sdaughter, I bein' nothin' but a fisherman, makin' little or nothin'.

"September was comin' on. Phoebe tole me to come up to the house, where she was, and she would settle some accounts there was between us. I went, and she had it all figured out that she owed me \$1.37.

"She went upstairs to git the money, and she stayed so long that at last I looked around for somep'n to interest me. I got up and walked about the room. There was a partly finished letter lay in' on the desk. Without thinkin' what I was doin' I read a few lines, and they was the most important lines to me I ever read. They just made my heart thump like a hammer splittin' logs.

"When Phoebe come in with the money she owed me I caught her in my arms.

"What I want to know is why she couldn't have let me know she wanted me in a plain, straightforward way, without writin' to a friend and puttin' it where I'd see it."

A War Blight

BY RUTH GRAHAM

This story illustrates the fact that, no matter how high one may be in the social scale, there is no escape from the trials and disappointments that beset humanity.

The estates of the Earl of Buffington and Sir Andrew Martindale, representatives of the old aristocracy of England, adjoined. The earl's only son, Oliver Tisdale, from the time he was seven years old, was permitted to play with Gladys Martindale, a girl of five. Then Oliver went to Eton and returned a handsome manly youth of seventeen. Gladys was at this time fifteen.

There is something delightful in the love of two persons of opposite sex at this tender age. They drift together unconscious of the slowly weaving thongs that are binding them to each other. It is a spiritual rather than a passionate love. At least it was so between these two. To Oliver, Gladys was something to be revered, protected, a thing of beauty both bodily and spiritually, not to be profaned. To Gladys, Oliver was the embodiment of manly strength and beauty. He was heir to an earldom, and this cast upon him a glamour, for she was merely a younger daughter of a baronet.

No word of love was spoken between them at this period, for neither was conscious of love. Oliver went to Cambridge university, where he was graduated with credit, and choosing the army for his profession entered one of the regiments most frequented by noblemen. When he came home as a soldier he was a man and Gladys was a woman.

What had been a sweet companionship now burst forth into a passion. The two were inseparable, and in time their engagement was announced. It was to have been expected that Oliver being heir to an earldom, would have mated with one of equal rank with himself and who would bring him an estate to match his own instead of uniting with a portionless daughter of a country baronet. But so charming was his fiancée that his family made no objection to receiving her as the future mistress of Buffington castle. Indeed, she was warmly welcomed.

The nuptials and Oliver's coming of age were celebrated at the same time. If ever a couple seemed destined to a happy life this one certainly did. They had rank, wealth, health, everything that was calculated to make life enjoyable. The young lord was respected and his lady was beloved.

Nevertheless, to the eastward a dark cloud was rising that was destined to overshadow the world. Suddenly grim war sounded her trumpet on the continent. It was heard across the Channel, and there was hurrying to and fro among British soldiers. Then Oliver left his bride to whom he had been married but a few weeks to join his command.

The parting to her came as a great shock. In such cases the man is buoyed up by the excitement of the hour; it is

the woman who suffers. His mind is taken up with that upon which he is forced to think; her mind is free to dwell upon the break and upon gloomy forebodings.

And poor Gladys' forebodings in this case became realities. While that handful of British soldiers who formed the left wing of the united forces of England, France and Belgium were driven southward upon Paris news continually came across the strait of Dover of many an Englishman who would never return to his home. Many an heir to a title and estate went down like the plainest soldier in the ranks. Among those reported killed was the man on whom Gladys' happiness was dependent.

For some time the news was kept from her, since there was a dread that she would not be able to bear it. But finally, fearing that she would hear of her loss through some unauthorized channel, her friends advised that she should be informed. Then arose the question who should inform her and how the announcement should be made. Both her parents shrank from the ordeal. It was finally committed to the family physician.

The shock brought a singular effect. When the bride heard that she was a widow she was stunned, and at the passing away of the first effect she was left with the hallucination that her husband was with her. Whether she saw him in the flesh or in the spirit was not understood by those about her. When she walked out she appeared to be communing with some one walking beside her. While sitting by herself at home either reading or doing fancy work she would occasionally make a remark to one sitting beside her.

No one intruded upon her to learn the exact nature of her hallucination. It was something too sacred to be profaned. One feature tended to render those near and dear to her content with it. It seemed to replace the mourning under which she would have suffered but for its existence.

For this reason physicians advised that no attempt be made to convince her of her hallucination, for in case she realized that her husband was dead a worse condition was feared. As it was, she did not seem to be unhappy.

Such is war. It is no respecter of persons. From time immemorial it has been the profession of the high born, who have been leaders of the humble. Together they have been sacrificed to the grim monster.

Will the day ever come when man will rise so far above his brute nature that he will settle his differences by peaceful methods?

HIS RIVAL

by AGNES G. BROGAN.

Jimmie Taylor watched many evenings, with a scowl of displeasure, as his sweetheart bent over her knitting. This devotion to gray yarn, in his presence, had, become tiresome. Anticipated happy hours were spoiled by Grace's absent-minded responses to his personal conversation—for Jimmie was discussing the possibilities of their new home.

He had counted upon his fiancée's enthusiasm and help, as they would plan together the furnishings of that home which was a long dreamed-of goal. But during the stress of wartime Grace had been distraught. Indifferent. What could have caused the change? Surely, oh, and Jimmie had caught his breath at the thought, she could not have ceased to care; neither could anyone else have come between them. Night after night, and day after day she had sat at his side here in her mother's comfortable living room, with no intruder to cause him apprehension. "Shall we have the dining room in delft blue, dear?" he had asked one evening. "M-ni-m-n," murmured the girl unintelligibly, as she was counting stitches. "Or old rose?" queried Jim. Grace's eyes had rested for a moment upon him blankly. They were very beautiful eyes, and the lover patiently waited. Presently Grace rolled up the knitting and slipped it into her gay-colored bag, coming close to rest her hand on his shoulder. "Jimmie," she had begged, "don't you think, at this troubled time, that we ought to put nil thoughts of personal comfort, and—er—triumph, from us in one devoted effort to help the brave men who are giving their very lives for our country? Just because you are a little beyond the age limit is no reason why you should not sacrifice, too, in your way. Marriage means added expense, Jimmie. Yourself only to provide for, you could give most generously to the Causes, and I am well cared for at home. Later, in a peaceful time, we might more conscientiously realize our future Joy, but now.—"

Grace had paused then, quite out of breath. She was wondering what else it was that Myra Bally told her. Myra, a great Red Cross enthusiast, had advised freely among her young friends. Jimmie, staring at his formerly submissive sweetheart as though she had struck him, told her that she could not realize what she was saying; and Grace, calmly opening the bag to regain her knitting, had dropped from its depths a crumpled note. Flushing almost guiltily, the girl reached for the note, but Jimmie forestalled her, and a jealous flash shone in his fine eyes. "Who is it from?" he fiercely asked her. Raising her chin defiantly, Grace had admitted that the note was from a soldier—man for whom she had been knitting. "What right," demanded the angry lover, "has a strange man to correspond with you?" "The right of courtesy," she had crisply answered; "It's a letter of thanks for the sweater and helmet and gloves, and—" "Heaven knows, you must have fitted him out completely," Jimmie acknowledged. "Will you let me see that letter?" Grudgingly, the girl obeyed. It had been his turn to flush then, and the angry red creeping up to his heavy, dark hair, left Jim in an unenviable mood. "Sentimental stuff!" he muttered disgustedly. "Dreamed gratefully of his benefactress, while the warm sweater sheltered him from the breeze." "Calls you his 'angel lady.'" "You are silly, Jimmie Taylor," she said at last. "You'd better go home." And abruptly her lover had gone. After his departure Grace smoothed carefully the extravagantly grateful note, while a smile played about her lips.

Of course, she could not be actually in love with the clever writer of those beautifully penned epistles, but romance held her in its —romance and Idealism. And he, Jim, must stand aside until the fancy had passed. Would it pass? Returning soon now, perhaps, would this absent soldier seek her out, and finding her more lovely than even he could have dreamed, would he make her "Ideal" a realization? Resolutely Jimmie kept away from his beloved. Hers had been the fault, he told himself if she wished it, must be the undoing. And evidently Grace wished it "If you will come tonight," called her sweet voice over the phone, "I will show you my last letter—from the soldier." A laughing note in the request forced Jim to ignore its mockery. Still forbidding was his attitude as he awaited his sweetheart in the lamplight. Smiling, Grace slipped her arm through his as she thrust the note before him. Then she pressed her face against her lover's shoulder. This is what he read—My dear Miss Lady: "The comrade who wrote my letters is gone from here. I now can speak or write proper English. But I want to say thank you. My wife, she say thank you too—

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